The Frontier Gandhi

His Place in History

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The Frontier Gandhi

His Place in History

M S Korejo

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While I wrote this book,
the world did not stand still,
thanks to Sajideh,
to whom I dedicate this work.

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Foreword

I had the privilege of observing Mr Korejo's keen sense of political perception as far back as 1945-6, during the crucial elections, while he was completing his college education. Subsequently, he joined the Forest Service and it seems that in the solitude of the forests and national parks a political critic was quietly taking shape in him. However, his urge to give concrete expression to his analytical mind remained dormant till 1973, when he joined the foreign service.

In undertaking the present work, he has embarked on a difficult mission; Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, like Mahatma Gandhi, was a controversial personality. Both were aware of the pitfalls of their mission. But both stood their ground, despite opposition from their own people, till the end of their lives. Thus, the very selection of the topic of the book, in itself, is a bold initiative on the part of the author, which should not only be appreciated but also emulated by political critics. Leaders and parties must be subjected to objective analysis in a dispassionate manner, as a service to the cause of democracy. This breed of authors stimulates self-analysis and in-party evaluation—an exercise which has unfortunately been neglected so far.

The age of dogmatism, self-righteousness and hero worship in our political culture must now come to an end. There is a need to change our outlook, based on pragmatism and realism, in conformity with the fast-changing political scenario all over the world.

Political personalities in Pakistan have received a partisan deal, in as much as they have been projected as heroes by their supporters and condemned as villains by their opponents. Balanced and unbiased judgements on them have been rare. In such a partisan political setting. Mr Korejo's pen picture of Bacha Khan is a refreshing departure from the beaten track. He has broken new ground by evaluating Bacha Khan's political

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mission in a manner worthy of his outstanding calibre. Some of the author's conclusion and comments may not be in consonance with the perceptions and findings of others. But, as suggested by the author himself, no political personality is above controversy, and the final judgement must be left to history.

Much of the political confrontation in Pakistan is caused by the rigid positions adopted by parties and their leaders. They tend to see issues in absolute black or in absolute white. Such inflexibility closes the doors to dialogue. Our intellectuals must come forward, explore the grey areas, locate the meeting points and guide the politicians to the avenues of mutual accommodation. I am happy to find such pointers in Mr Korejo's effort.

A word about the title of the book. The Frontier Gandhi symbolises Bacha Khan's association with Mahatma Gandhi, whose greatness is recognized and who influenced Bacha Khan's life and mission. Difference of opinion about both existed before independence and persists even now. But that need not minimise our recognition that Bacha Khan was indeed a fearless leader of the independence movement. If his sacrifices to the cause of freedom are given due place in our history, that will advance the goal of federalism and national integration.

Karachi
27 April 1992.

Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi

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Preface

Jatoi House, Karachi. An April morning in 1991. Mustafa and I sipped tea. I had not seen him for a year, a year which had been quite eventful. The country had had three Prime Ministers, and a lot more had happened.

As we talked, two Pathans walked in. They had come to invite Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi to participate in the Second Bacha Khan Peace Conference, scheduled for 22-23 April 1991, in Peshawar. Jatoi checked his engagements with his secretary and accepted. The Pathans handed the invitation and left. I too was tempted to get myself invited, but hesitated. When I mentioned this to Mustafa, he promised to do something about it. The next day he confirmed the invitation.

On the way to Peshawar, my thoughts travelled back into history. Images of Bacha Khan came to my mind. I saw him for the first time in the late thirties, participating in a Congress rally in a little town three miles south of my village, Murad Korejo, and equally close to New Jatoi, deep in the interior, near the Indus bank. I must have been in the tenth grade then, and did not quite feel the impact of the occasion. But I recollect having been fascinated by Bacha Khan's towering personality, standing head and shoulders above all others. The flag hoisting ceremony was followed by slogans of *Inqilab Zindabad, Mahatma Gandhi Zindabad, Jawaharlal Nehru Zindabad,* and *Frontier Gandhi Zindabad*. The crowd then sang *Bande Matram* in chorus. The ceremony ended with a short speech by a *khadi*-clad Congress leader in a Gandhi cap. He called on the British to quit India and demanded the resignation of the Sindh cabinet. After the ceremony, I walked to the enclosure which had been prepared for the conference sessions, complete with a dais, and seating arrangements for office bearers, delegates, journalists and the general public. I was impressed by the arrangements.

The flight from Karachi to Peshawar was smooth. My mind travelled into the past as flashes of memory flitted across. I

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grew up in a middle class farming family in a typical Sindhi rural setting. Since the days of Mohenjo-daro, my forefathers must have been engaged in farming. Grandmother's stories going back a few generations, describing my ancestors non-aggressive, resigned and simple disposition and their dedication to farming, suggests a settled mode of life. Their faith was probably Buddhist before the Arabs occupied the lower Indus basin.

I became aware of the style of Sindh politics during the 1937 elections. Muslim politics always had a feudal flavour. There were no political parties, no rallies, no speeches, no flag hoisting, no national anthem and no public debate. Our area candidate for the provincial assembly was Khan Bahadur Imam Bakhsh Jatoi, grandfather of Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. He faced tough competition. Election work consisted of contacting heads of clans and tribes, *Mirs*, *pirs*, and *waderas*, who commanded the vote banks. Support of these vote banks was won through friendly persuasion, social pressures, petty favours, intimidation, threats and even bribes. My father who was respected and influential in the area, threw his weight behind Jatoi. Besides securing his own area for Jatoi, he trespassed into rival territory and succeeded in converting the head of the Korejo clan, or the Jam, in favour of Jatoi, a feat which he performed with finesse, so much so, that the loyalty of the Jam remains firm to this day. Political vendetta is not a new phenomenon in Sindh either. Intimidation on political grounds was practised then, as it is now. Tactics may have changed but the style is the same. In 1937, my father's favourite horse was 'kidnapped' by Jatoi's rival. Today, the horses have been replaced by parliamentarians. The stables are the same, only the inmates have been promoted, and the ransom has gone up.

I reached Peshawar. Since my wife adores this city, she had accompanied me. We stayed in the Forest College guest house, among the rose gardens and tree groves that run for miles, beautify the landscape and perfume the air. The place has old memories. Somewhere in the seat of learning next to the guest house is my picture with my name, and the year in which I qualified. The serenity of the place combined with the generous hospitality of our Pathan friends made us feel at home. Even the occasional gun fire from the nearby tribal area,

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which broke the silence of the night, sounded like music to our ears.

At the conference, during the lunch break, Mustafa introduced me to Khan Abdul Wali Khan, told him about our old association, as well as my background in farming, forestry, landscaping and diplomacy. He then added that I had been inspired by the conference to write a book on Bacha Khan. 'For or against,' was Wali Khan's spontaneous question, and I replied, 'Factual.' 'Good, I appreciate that, because there is so much prejudice around, that facts are suppressed and objectivity is sacrificed,' he remarked. 'Yes, facts are suppressed,' I reflected for a moment and thought that here was an appropriate title for the book. But when I heard the speech of Ajmal Khattak, in whom I see a spark of a Pakhtun revolutionary still retaining the flavour of Mahatma Gandhi, I changed the title.

M S Korejo

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Introduction

The Congress rally close to my village in the late 1930s had raised many questions in my young mind. How was it that there was not a single Sindhi Muslim participating in the meeting, held in an area which was ninety-five per cent Muslim? Was the Congress a Hindu party? If so, what was Abdul Ghaffar Khan doing there? Any political discussion with my father was taboo. I would have been punished for going to a political meeting. But I had my high school teachers, who were highly politicised. My school was about a mile away, set up by a local Hindu philanthropist. I was one of the five Muslim beneficiaries on the roll. My teachers assured me that the Congress stood for all the Indians, that Sindhi Muslims did not participate because they were illiterate and backward. 'Look at this school. Out of 400 students, only five or six are Muslims, even though we charge little or no tuition fees from the poor.' He informed me that the Congress had started its mass contact campaign, that Abdul Ghaffar Khan, whom he called the Frontier Gandhi, would be visiting a lot more places in Sindh and would enrol Muslims in the cities where Muslims were educated. I was satisfied.

As I grew, the haze gradually dispersed and the picture became clearer. The Frontier Gandhi had inspired me to search and discover why Sindh had failed to throw up a leader to match him, and why Sindhi Muslims were far behind the Pathans in following the Congress. The Sindhi Press, which was active but partisan, could not provide a clear insight. The only influential and 'liberal' Sindhi daily newspaper which projected the Congress line was the *Daily Hindu*, but its very name eroded its nationalist credibility, and scared away Muslim readership. Somehow it believed, or made one believe, that 'Hindu' was synonymous with 'Indian', and 'Hinduism' with 'Indian nationalism'. But the nationalist interpretation, to be effective had to be shared by the Muslims too, who formed

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seventy-five per cent of the population of Sindh. To convince the Sindhi Muslims was not an easy task. Indeed, it was made more difficult by the growing popularity and the expanding network of the *Arya Samaj* and other fanatic Hindu movements. These movements had captured a sizeable Hindu platform and had disturbed the tranquil and tolerant Sindhi society, built by the Sufi intellectuals, both Hindu and Muslim. Belatedly, the *Daily Hindu* tried to appear nationalistic by renaming itself *Hindustan*, but the change came too late to influence perceptions.

For centuries Sindh had been the haven of Sufis and mystics, both Hindus and Muslims, who preached humanism, love, harmony and unity. Their teachings had transformed Sindh into a land of peace and tranquillity. Hindus and Muslims paid homage to the same saints, dead and alive. Among the followers of Muslim Sufi saints were Hindu intellectuals of the highest calibre. They constituted the human material capable of providing common leadership. These were the people who, together with their Muslim counterparts contributed to Sindhi culture, enriched Sindhi literature and raised the status of the Sindhi language in the eyes of the outside world.

The soil of Sindh was fertile enough—a virgin land—for the birth of a leader who could unite the Sindhis into a single entity; a leader, who could be a mystic, a man of God, like Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who could inspire faith and command following. At the same time, he would have to be a liberal politician like Mr Das of Bengal, win the hearts of the illiterate, the deprived, the dispossessed, put a leash on the insatiable greed of the exploiters and disarm the fanatics. The Congress had a chance to groom such a leader. Had Mahatma Gandhi wanted to produce such a man in Sindh, he could have done so. But he did not even make an attempt. While in the Frontier he produced one, Sindh was left to the mercy of the Sindhi Hindu Congress leadership. It produced stalwarts like Acharya Kirpalani, Jairamdas Daulatram, Professor Ghanshyam, Professor Malkani and others, but they did not strike a chord in Sindh as the Khan did in the Frontier. Something was amiss. Their audience was limited to Sindhi Hindus only. The fault did not lie with separate electorates. It did not suit them to expand their audience. Had they attempted to do so, they would have had to yield too much ground, which they chose not to.

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Sindhi Hindus acted as an impenetrable barrier between the Congress and the Sindhi Muslims whose economic exploitation by the Hindus had reached alarming proportions. Hindus filled the government jobs, because the illiterate or half-educated Muslims were not qualified. Most of the farm land owned by the Muslims was passing into Hindu ownership, as the debts owed to Hindu moneylenders, once incurred, could never be repaid under the manipulative money lending system practised by the Hindus, and the extravagant manner in which the land-owning Muslims spent money. Sindhi Muslims saw their salvation in the separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency. That demand was opposed by the Hindus, who formed only twenty-five per cent of the population, even though, after separation, they had the prospect of getting weightage of up to forty per cent. They opposed the separation, saying that bankrupt Sindh could not stand alone, and that it needed the crutches of Bombay to survive. The wealth generated by Sindh was possessed by the Hindus who evaded taxes and caused bankruptcy. Not long after it became a province, Sindh generated a surplus, thanks to the inherent strength of its farming sector. Could any Sindhi oppose Sindh's autonomy? This was an un-Sindhi or an anti-Sindhi posture. The same hostile attitude was reflected in the Nehru Report (1928) which conceded the separation of Sindh with strings attached to please the Sindhi Hindus. No such rider was put on the NWFP getting full provincial status because it was a Congress stronghold, even though it was much poorer. Nationalist Muslims who signed the Nehru Report did so as blind followers of Nehru, otherwise they would have warned him of the adverse reaction of the Sindhi Muslims. Thus, the Sindhi Hindus offered their province to the Muslim League on a silver platter. The Congress tried to salvage its standing in Sindh by supporting a few over-ambitious Sindhi Muslims, but this was a half-hearted attempt, and it came too late. It proved counter-productive. By then the Muslim League had established its presence effectively.

While the Muslim League began to capture the Sindhi Muslim platform almost unchallenged, the Congress chose to adopt the role of a spectator to a potentially disastrous development. The Hindu youth began to strengthen the ranks of fascist groups like the *Arya Samaj*, the RSS and the *Hindu Mahasabha*.

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Communal confrontation became inevitable. The Masjid Manzalgah riot of Sukkur was one of the ugly manifestations of this confrontation. Deeply upset by the Sukkur riots, the Congress Working Committee called for a report by one of its leaders. The report submitted in 1939 made the startling revelation that, 'Communal prejudice and social reaction among Sindhi Congressmen were alienating Muslims from the Congress in the province. Congress MLAs in Sindh who represent the trading and educated class among the Hindus [have] cast away Congress principles and programme to the winds by obstructing and sometimes even nipping in the bud legislation which aims at ameliorating the condition of [the] Muslim masses in Sindh who are mainly agriculturists and are weighed down by poverty and debts . . . As long as the Congress is confined to the urban Hindus and acts as a cheap edition of the *Hindu Mahasabha*, there is no very bright future of the Congress amongst the down trodden and ignorant Muslim peasantry of Sindh.'[1]

The Muslim mass contact movement launched by the Congress in the late thirties was a clear indication of the fact that its popularity and support among the Muslims was eroding rapidly. While the Congress attempted to contradict the allegations of the excesses committed against the Muslim culture during the tenure of the Congress ministries (1937-9), it could not hide the infiltration of fanatic and intolerant Hindus within its active cadres. Reports of such infiltrations began to pour in. For example, an *Arya Samaj* preacher had been elected as President of the Balrampur Congress Committee, and he used his position and pressure tactics to preach *Shuddhi* to the Hindus and Hindu-Muslim unity to the Muslims.[2]

The visits of Abdul Ghaffar Khan to various places in Sindh as a part of the Congress Muslim mass contact campaign have to be seen against the backdrop of the loss of credibility of the Congress as a national party. The question arises as to whether the Khan was equipped to rescue the sinking ship of the Congress in Sindh. Did he provide a healing touch to the economic wounds inflicted on the Sindhi Muslims? Did he take the Sindhi Hindus to task for tarnishing the Congress image in Sindh? Did he recommend to the Congress high command that the Congress hierarchy be restructured in Sindh to win Muslim sympathy on the lines of the NWFP? No record has

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yet surfaced to that effect. It was pretty obvious that the Sindhi Hindus were hard nuts for Abdul Ghaffar Khan to crack. In that situation, the job could have been admirably done by Gandhi, or by Nehru or even by Vallabhai Patel. But it seems that the Congress relied upon the economic clout of the Sindhi Hindus to win the final round, and that the visits of Abdul Ghaffar Khan were calculated to pacify the ego of the nationalist Muslim leadership within the Congress ranks.

When Abdul Ghaffar Khan toured Sindh for the Congress mass contact campaign, he was kept insulated from the objective conditions. Mere flag-hoisting and speech-making could not win Muslim recruits. If he seriously wanted the Sindhi Muslims to follow the lead given by the Pathans, he should have tried to demolish the barrier erected by the Sindhi Hindus, as the first step. But either he did not see the barrier, or the barrier proved too tough for him. Years before, he had seen similar conditions in Bengal, and as a believer in non-violence, he recommended that Bengali Muslims accept the slavery of the Hindus and join them in expelling the British. The Bengali Muslims, however, were in no mood to listen to him. British slavery was subtle; it acted like a sedative which lulled them to sweet dreams for more than a century. Hindu slavery was crude, like a blunt knife, which hurt every moment.

Unlike Sindh, in the Frontier, the Pathan leaders had many cards to play: their sensitive geographical location, their strategic Khyber Pass, their lucrative Afghan-Central Asian connection, their proficiency in the use of the sword and the gun, their dynamism, their feat of recapturing the Kabul throne, their moneylending techniques, which surpassed even those of the Sindhi Hindu moneylenders, etc. The Congress had to spread out the red carpet for them. By contrast, in Sindh, the boot was on the other leg. Here, the Hindus formed a solid base for the Congress which had been strengthened by the forty per cent weightage given under the Government of India Act, 1935. On the political chess board the Muslim members of the Sindh Assembly were the pawns, being traded around by a few ambitious prospective Chief Ministers, at the mercy of the solid Hindu group, who turned the ministerial chairs into musical chairs. In the short run, the game paid dividends to the Sindhi Hindus. In the long run, the Congress lost Sindh.

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For, ultimately, democracy is the game of numbers, and, on the day of reckoning, the illiterate Muslims, or the *Jutts* as they were popularly called by their Hindu brethren, did not think twice. To an average Muslim, Pakistan meant, 'get rid of the *bania* supremacy now, and the future will take care of itself.'

Am I qualified to write on Abdul Ghaffar Khan? The decision was hard to make. He has written his autobiography—a relatively simple task for a political personality, who has lived through momentous events, and who has participated in the freedom movement, and worked for the social uplift of his people. The autobiography has an introduction by India's top ranking leader, the late Jaya Prakash Narayan. Besides, a detailed biography has been written by a reputed Indian author, who also has the distinction of being the author of a biography of Mahatma Gandhi's, and who had full access to the first hand source material on the Khan. His political heirs, who have the benefit of his intimate association, his inspiration, his guidance and have shared his lifelong experiences and sufferings, have also written on him. In comparison, I begin with a handicap. I am too remote, my knowledge is second hand. All I possess is my fascination with his personality and my school-boyish memory of a single visit, more than half a century ago. If I fail to do justice to the subject the reasons will be obvious.

What I have said in the book is based on bits and pieces of printed material assembled and arranged to construct a profile which is by no means complete. I believe that more research is needed to project the personality of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and to correct me if I have erred. Leaders of the subcontinent have been the victims of prejudice, both positive and negative, with the result that their real image remains blurred. Such attempts tend to reduce history to fairy tales, and the new generation is fed on emotion and dogma. Consequently, heroes turn into villains and vice versa. Abdul Ghaffar Khan is one of the victims of unfair treatment at the hands of his adversaries as well as his admirers. We owe it to history to separate facts from fiction and present the man, the saint, the politician, the social reformer, the freedom fighter, that he really was, and not the one we wish to see in him. To be authentic, history has to be frank and unforgiving. Its verdict on politicians can

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be severe and merciless, for they carry the delicate responsibility of making or unmaking nations.

Keeping this yardstick in mind, any attempt to write on Badshah Khan is a challenge. Was he a pan-Pakhtunist, an Indian nationalist, a Pakistani citizen, a citizen of the world, a saint, a *Khudai Khidmatgar*, a jail bird, an obstinate Pathan or a superman? Whatever he was, he was one of the most extraordinary personalities of his age. Some of his words and deeds were enigmatic, intriguing and full of contradictions. But don't all great men have unusual personalities? History is incomplete without exposing such contradictions. Mahatma Gandhi led hundreds of millions of Indians to freedom and yet he was a riddle to his most ardent and devoted followers. He preached non-violence and he fell victim to violence. Western-styled Jinnah became the Quaid-i-Azam of a hundred million Muslims, leaving the traditional Muslim leadership — the religious elites—out in the cold. Badshah Khan became the uncrowned king of the Pakhtuns of the world! Can his position be assailed because he had the courage (or audacity!) to resist the tidal flow of Muslim politics in the mid-twentieth century?

The reader will find answers to most of these questions in the following chapters. This is not a biography but a political profile, an analytical study, of Bacha Khan's political struggle. He had his achievements and he had his failures. All fighters do not win, and all winners do not rule. Bacha Khan had a religious dimension and a political dimension. His faith influenced his politics and his politics influenced his faith. Both have been discussed at great length. His role has been viewed in relation to the events he lived through and which dominated the greater part of the current century. His interaction with his great contemporaries, namely, Mahatma Gandhi, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, has been subjected to a detailed and indepth scrutiny, not to assign a grade or a status to him, in relation to them, but to judge their respective merits and judge him on his own merits.

In the politics of the subcontinent, conflict of opinion and disagreement to the point of confrontation, have been the rule rather than an exception. Many writers have consequently lost

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objectivity. To move closer to the truth, I have tried to test the veracity of one source against the evidence gathered from another source. The credibility of each source has been verified from a neutral source. If the source is British, it has been verified against another British source. If the source is Congress, I have relied upon the top Congress leaders. Events pertaining to Pakistan have been put to test by subsequent events within Pakistan. Bacha Khan's thoughts, words, and actions after independence have been allowed to be supported or contradicted by his political adversaries and commentators, whose opinions need not be considered as the judgement of history.

This work has been facilitated by the availability of a variety of sources, including British, Indian and Pakistani. Out of the lot, one source presented some problems: that is Wali Khan's book *Facts Are Facts – The Untold Story Of India's Partition*. To me, the central theme of that book is the projection of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his *Khudai Khidmatgars*, to which there can be no objection. But he has attempted to accomplish the objective by down-grading Jinnah and the Muslim League. Jinnah appears as a villain of the extreme variety, a traitor to India, and a British agent. I was tempted to ignore Wali Khan's work but that would have been a disservice to history. In dealing with his approach I also encountered a technical difficulty. His quotations are too brief to establish a context, and too selective to qualify as credible source material. To inspire confidence, a judgement must be comprehensive, objective and balanced. No personality, situation or event, in the Indian setting, appears as clear as back and white. There are a lot of grey areas in every case, which must be probed in depth.

The irony is that both Jinnah and Bacha Khan have been misunderstood by their rivals and their admirers. Both were disliked by the *mullahs*. Both earned the *fatwas* of *Kafir* from the fundamentalists. But both had their own perceptions, which differed. Jinnah does not need the crutches of the Muslim League, nor does Abdul Ghaffar Khan need the crutches of his political heirs. Both stand on their own pedestals, and both created history. I have therefore reluctantly taken the liberty of quoting extensively from the scholarly works of some authors, not to defend Jinnah or Bacha Khan, or to silence their critics, but to clear the perspective, only to the extent, that such

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an exercise was found relevant to the mission of Bacha Khan. Since this is not a biography, but an analysis of historical and political events and personalities, which have a bearing on the personality, faith and politics of Bacha Khan, the book has not taken the shape of a narrative, beginning from his early life, and ending with his last days. Instead, the book is divided into topics, assuming the shape of chapters; each chapter is self-contained, as a result of which some repetition of a comment or a quotation becomes unavoidable. Finally, this is not a verdict, but a view, an opinion and an analysis. Opinions change and views alter when more information becomes available, or the same event is interpreted differently. The final verdict is left to history.

NOTES

1. Singh, Anita Inder, *The Origins of the Partition of India (1936-47)*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p. 40, quoting *Report on Sukkur Riots to Congress Working Committee*, AICC file No. 1, 1939-40, p. 18.
2. Ibid., p. 40, quoting AICC file No. 20, p. 657, containing letter from Ambika Charan, dated 4 April 1937.

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1

From the Oxus to the Indus

The Moghul Empire began to disintegrate in India after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. The Marathas, the Jatts and the Sikhs had inflicted crushing blows and brought extensive territories in north, central and south India under their effective control. Besides, the East India Company appeared on the scene and its trading had assumed political dimensions. Against this backdrop, Shah Waliullah (1703-62) rose to prominence and rekindled the waning spirit of Islam on the lines of his Arab contemporary Muhammad ibn al Wahab. His mission was to 'purify and renovate' Islam and prepare the Muslims for a *Jihad* —holy war—in order to re-establish their past glory. His follower, Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi (1786-1831), launched an armed struggle from Charsadda, establishing his base in the Pathan heartland in 1826. He declared a holy war against Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of the Punjab, whose domain extended to the Pakhtun areas. The local Pathan chiefs, who were firmly committed to Islam and freedom from foreign domination, supported Barelvi in his *Jihad*. Together, they inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Sikhs and succeeded in carving out a small theocratic state in the Frontier. Initially, Barelvi's *Jihad* was directed against the Sikhs, but eventually, it was intended to be converted into a war of liberation against the British. His dream was to set up an Islamic state in the North West Frontier of India, which could inspire the Muslims to reconquer India. But his dream came to an abrupt end, as his state apparatus could not control the 'unruly' Pathans. He was killed in May 1831 along with a large number of his followers.[1]

Barelvi's death did not mean an end of the Islamic uprising. The British were facing resistance on many fronts. They had

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launched the first Afghan War in 1839, to counter Russian inroads into Muslim Central Asia, but this misadventure ended in a disaster, and they were forced to retreat in 1842. This humiliating episode established the fact that British power was neither invincible nor omnipotent, and that it could be challenged even by the ill-equipped tribesmen of Afghanistan. This realization led to two wars, fought valiantly by the Sikhs across the Sutlej (1845) and in Gujrat (1849), and the great revolt of 1857 in the British Indian army, which shook the foundations of the Empire, although the British emerged victorious in the end.[2] However, the Islamic *Jihad* by the followers of Barelvi, with its bases in the Frontier mountains continued to pose problems. In 1858, a task force of 5,000 men, headed by Sir Sidney Cotton launched an offensive and liquidated the *Mujahideen's* base at Sittana. The *Mujahideen* set up another base and five years later, recaptured Sittana. This holy war against the British was fought in the Frontier, but its logistic support, including men, material and finance, was contributed by Muslims throughout India, particularly, by Muslims from Bombay, Patna, and Bareilly.

In September 1863, the British dispatched a large military expedition to crush the *Mujahideen*, but they could not achieve a decisive victory. A new strategy was devised, which, instead of indulging in the costly adventure of destroying the 'rebel' strongholds in the Pathan homelands, aimed at starving them of their logistic support, by stopping the supply of men, material and finances from India. Under this plan, Indian Muslims were subjected to harassment and torture. They were arrested indiscriminately and tried in special courts set up in Ambala in 1864, and at Patna in 1865. Muslims found guilty of supporting the Frontier-based struggle were punished with transportation for life, and deported to the Andaman Islands. In 1868, there was another wave of arrests, trials and punishments. In 1870 and 1871, there were yet more trials and convictions.[3]

W W Hunter, in his book, *The Indian Musalman*, spoke of a 'standing rebel camp of Muslims in the North-West Frontier Province, as a part of a dangerous Muslim conspiracy in India'. He recommended repression of these 'traitors.'[4]

The future of India's North-West Frontier was determined neither by religion, nor by language, nor by the colour of the

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Pathans. It was decided by its own geographical position and history. Invasions, migrations, wars and treaties make and mar nations. Centuries of British-Russian rivalry had turned Afghanistan into a buffer, whereby the north of the Oxus was grabbed by the Russians, while the area south-east of the Khyber Pass came under British domination. Under a treaty with Afghanistan, ratified by successive Afghan kings, a boundary line, popularly known as the Durand Line, was demarcated in 1893. The area lying east of this line, about a thousand mile long—running from Chitral in the north to the Sulaiman Ranges in Dera Ismail Khan in the south—was separated from the Punjab in 1901 by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, and called the North-West Frontier Province. The Durand Line had already divided many Pakhtun tribes including the Mohmands, Shinwaris, Afridis, Waziris, Kakars, etc. While establishing the NWFP, some Pakhtun tribes like the Kakars, Pani, Tarin and Shiranis were separated and incorporated in Balochistan. In doing so, the high-land Pakhtuns were separated from the low-land Pakhtuns. Besides, some non-Pakhtuns were added to the NWFP. Thus, the Pakhtuns, as an ethnic entity, were split not only between Afghanistan and British India, they were sub-divided within India itself.[5]

The anti-British armed resistance in India, carried out throughout the nineteenth century, finally came to an end, with the collapse of the *Mujahideen* bases in the Frontier, and the liquidation of their support throughout India. Indians had begun to realize that the British power had come to stay, and that the venue of the resistance must shift from the battlefield to the political platform, where the battle of ideas could be fought. The British dismantled the existing system of education and justice, and replaced it with its own system. What is more, they helped the Indians set up a political platform in 1885—the Indian National Congress—and patronized and guided its course through those who could be trusted. Thus the emergence of the Indian National Congress represented the beginning of a political consciousness among the Indians, and served as a training ground for the political leadership, on the British pattern. Gradually, the Indian leadership grew in stature and transformed the Congress into a national political platform. With the advent of the twentieth century, the Congress was able to

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spread its influence throughout India. However, by a strange contrast, while the Pathans had participated in and provided bases for Muslim resistance, for a century, they remained impervious to the call of the Congress responding to it as late as 1929. But once they embraced the Congress, their commitment to its creed became so deep and profound, that, when the Congress conceded Pakistan, the hardcore Pathan leadership within the Congress would not concede. This aspect has been dealt with in greater detail throughout this book.

The preceding paragraphs provide the perspective in which the political role of the great Pakhtun leader, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, has to be studied and analysed, in order to determine his place in the history of South Asia. His ancestors had the distinction of participating in Muslim resistance against the British. His great grandfather, Ubaidullah Khan, was sentenced to death by the British. His grandfather, Saifullah Khan, and his father Bahram Khan also remained in the forefront of the Islamic *Jihad* against the British. For Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *Jihad* against the British had become a family tradition and a heritage. When he grew up he discovered that the art of freedom fighting had changed, and that guns had been replaced by the political platform.

Being a devout Muslim, his initial contacts with Indian leadership began with the Muslim divines. He was invited to the well-known seat of Islamic learning in Deoband by *Shaikh-ul-Hind* Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan, in 1914. He also met Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi, the great revolutionary, in Deoband, and discussed political issues with these and other scholars. These preliminary contacts did not lead him to join any political party. Abdul Ghaffar Khan had his own interpretation of the Islamic *Jihad* launched from the Frontier against the British. He speaks of the Free Islamic State established in the Buner area and says that the head of this state, Naimatullah, had links with the British, that some of his followers were planted by the British, and that the money received from the Indian Muslims to support this Islamic state was wasted on personal luxuries. When he reported the state of affairs to the *Shaikh-ul-Hind*, he stopped payments to Naimatullah and chose another place in Bajour asking Ghaffar Khan to help Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi in establishing the 'Free State'.[6]

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Coming as it does from the Khan, this version has credibility. It points to the fact that the *Jihad* initiated by Barelvi in the nineteenth century had effectively been called off with the beginning of the political movements in India, but certain pockets of tribal resistance still survived which received support from Deoband on the one side, and hobnobbed with the British on the other.

There is no record indicating Abdul Ghaffar Khan's views on Indians participating in the First World War. However, his most important contemporaries, namely, Gandhi and Jinnah had adopted clear cut positions. Gandhi had supported the British war effort without reservation, advised Indians to enlist themselves in large numbers, and set his personal example by touring extensively to launch a recruitment campaign. Gandhi did so in keeping with his principle, that even though the British were an occupying power, and therefore an enemy of India, it would be immoral to hit the enemy below the belt and take advantage of his difficulty. By contrast, Jinnah opposed India supporting the British war effort and also opposed Gandhi's recruitment efforts.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan's first known political activity was his participation in the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League in Agra in 1913, presided over by Sir Ibrahim Rahmatullah. He was highly impressed by Sir Rahmatullah's speech as well as by the speeches of Sir Aga Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.[7] This was a great event for him which initiated him into politics. Subsequently, he convened a protest meeting at Utmanzai to condemn the Rowlett Act after the First World War. The army besieged the village, arrested his father Bahram Khan but Abdul Ghaffar Khan managed to escape. Later, he surrendered to the British under the threat that his father would be executed.[8] He then joined the Khilafat Movement and became the President of the Frontier Khilafat Committee. During this movement he established close contacts with Maulana Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali, the leaders of the movement. He organized the movement in the Frontier and took substantial part in its activities, which included renouncing jobs under the British and migration from India, the slave country, to Afghanistan, the free country. He went to Kabul, met King Amanullah Khan and then began to have second

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thoughts about the direction taken by the movement. The King wanted to settle the Indian Muslims but they preferred to launch a *Jihad* against the British from their base in Afghanistan. The King was not prepared to allow such activity and consequently, create problems for himself. This brought an end to the ill-conceived movement. When the British realized the damage done to the Indian Muslims by the movement, they encouraged more and more migrations to get rid of the troublesome elements in India, as well as to create economic and social problems for Afghanistan. The British also used the movement by sending their agents to Afghanistan in the garb of Khilafat agitators. Abdul Ghaffar Khan has lamented the tragic end of the movement, which did enormous damage to the Pathans.[9]

In 1928, the Khan proceeded to Calcutta to attend the Khilafat Conference. He listened to the presidential address by Maulana Mohammed Ali, in which the latter castigated the Hindus and criticized their culture, 'which did not behove a leader of his calibre'.[10] Simultaneously, the Congress Subject Committee Meeting was also being held in Calcutta and the Khan attended it. This was his first encounter with the Congress. During the speech of Gandhi, Ghaffar Khan noticed that a young man frequently interrupted the speaker with verbal attacks. Gandhi, instead of displaying any anger or emotion, responded with a smile every time, and continued his speech. Giving his impressions to his Pathan companions, the Khan drew a contrast between 'Gandhiji the leader of Hindus and Mohammed Ali, the leader of our own Khilafat.'[11]

Later, the Khan and his companions called on Maulana Mohammed Ali and pointed out the negative impact of his intemperate speech, in contrast to the positive impact made by Gandhi's approach in the face of provocation. Mohammad Ali in a 'fit of anger' responded, 'Look at these wild Pathans —trying to teach me.' The Khan was disappointed, he left Calcutta and also left the Khilafat movement for good.[12]

Ghaffar Khan's political activities left no doubt that he had charted out for himself a definite and substantive role in Indian politics in general and Indian Muslim politics, in particular. But suddenly, on a fateful day, in 1929, Abdul Ghaffar Khan shifted his attention from Delhi, to events, across the Khyber Pass, in Kabul. In January 1929, King Amir Amanullah Khan

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had been overthrown by a brigand chief, called Habibullah, known to history as Bacha Saqa. The Pakhtun tribesmen joined hands against him, liquidated Bacha Saqa, in October 1929, and installed Muhammad Nadir Khan on the Kabul throne. This historic incident excited the Pakhtun tribes on both sides of the Durand Line. They began to look beyond the victory in the counter-coup, into the future of Pakhtuns reuniting into a Pakhtun nation, between the Oxus and the Indus, in fulfilment of their national aspirations.

A largely attended meeting of Pakhtun leaders was convened in Utmanzai in 1929, to celebrate the Pakhtun victory in Kabul, and to mark the solidarity of the Pakhtun nation. Addressing this meeting, Abdul Ghaffar Khan expressed hopes of his long-cherished vision of the establishment of a Pakhtun nation turning into reality. He announced the founding of a pan-Pakhtun organization, calling it *Khudai Khidmatgars*, whose aim would be to create awakening among the Pakhtuns. The organization was declared to be strictly socio-religious and non-political in character. The methods of achieving the aim of Pakhtun national entity were also defined. An oath was prescribed for every *Khudai Khidmatgar*, to enforce discipline, loyalty and dedication. Those present announced their membership pledge and took the following oath: 'I am a *Khudai Khidmatgar* and as God needs no service, I shall serve Him by serving His creatures selflessly. I shall never use violence. I shall never retaliate or take revenge, and I shall forgive anyone who indulges in oppression and excesses against me. I shall not be a party to any intrigue, family feuds or enmity, and I shall treat every Pakhtun as my brother and comrade. I shall give up evil customs and practices. I shall lead a simple life, do good and refrain from wrong-doing. I shall develop good character and cultivate good habits. I shall not lead an idle life. I shall expect no reward for my services. I shall be fearless and be prepared for any sacrifice.'[13]

There were about three thousand villages in the NWFP. Abdul Ghaffar Khan visited almost all. Young men flocked to him, put on Red Shirts—the dress prescribed for *Khudai Khidmatgars*, hence their popular name Red-Shirts—and pledged themselves to absolute obedience to the orders of their leader. The movement was organized on military lines, a high level

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of discipline was an essential component. Non-violence was to be an article of faith. The rifle, the revolver, the sword—so dear to the Pathan—were rejected.[14]

The British Chief Commissioner, Mr Emerson records his conversation, in 1931, with Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who explained the goals of the *Khudai Khidmatgars* as: a) consolidation of the Afghans, b) social reform among the Afghans, and c) preservation of the Frontier Province for the Afghans, if there was a revolution in India, threatening the security of the Province. Mr Emerson also records that whenever he mentioned violent events in any other province, either by way of illustration, or comparison, the Khan at once interrupted and said that he was concerned with the Frontier only.[15]

There were apparent contradictions in the declared aims and objects of the *Khudai Khidmatgars* at the organization's very inception. These contradictions did not take long to surface. Indeed, with the passage of time, as the movement gained momentum, the contradictions became more pronounced. To begin with, this socio-religious and expressly non-political movement was launched in direct consequence of a violent politico-military event, culminating in the overthrow of one, and the installation of another regime, bearing a distinctly ethnic label, in Kabul, in which the Pakhtun tribes, the forerunners of the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, participated, with lethal weapons. Thus, a violent event in Kabul was celebrated in a non-violent setting in Utmanzai, giving birth to a non-violent movement. The political kinship between the ruling family in Kabul and the non-political prime-movers of the new movement, had quite a few political repercussions, on both sides of the Khyber Pass for a long time.

The Movement rested on three pillars: namely, the unity of the Pakhtuns, east and west of the Khyber, the spirit of Islam, and the creed of non-violence. The call for the unity of ethnic Pakhtuns was a valid call, but it could not be viewed in isolation from its long-term political fall-out on either side of the Khyber Pass. Besides, when the call was made by a party based on military discipline, it sounded like a call by the Nazi party for the unity of ethnic Germans, for the expulsion of Jews and for the occupation of Europe. Such a call was also in conflict with the spirit of Islam—one of the pillars of the movement.

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The creed of non-violence, as defined and elaborated by its author Mahatma Gandhi, and as adopted by the movement, was in conflict with the other two pillars, which permitted violence in self-defence. Finally, the outside world did not realize the significance of the command that the order of the leader was to be followed without question, which was a clear signal that the element of *shura* or consultation, which is an essential part of all civilized movements around the world, was completely ruled out. Had the party come into power at a time when a saintly person like its founder was no longer on the scene, and with no consultative system permissible, the movement could have turned into a dictatorship. The Movement swore by Islam sans *Ijma*.

Like other organized movements, the Red Shirts also published a monthly journal called *The Pakhtun* which was edited by the founder of the movement. Some extracts of the editorials of *The Pakhtun* are reproduced here:

> The Pakhtuns, including those in Afghanistan, form one nation. It is unfortunate that in Afghanistan there is no journal published in Pushto, the language of all Pakhtuns. . . . We are disappointed with our Afghan brethren. . . . They are Pakhtuns . . . but their state language is Persian. . . . There are over ten million Pakhtuns in the Frontier, tribal territories and Afghanistan . . . also spread in many cities all over the world. They man coastal vessels, in Indian Ocean ports, they are employed as police officers in East Bengal, they work in Bombay docks, Calcutta, Karachi and London; they guard houses and shops . . . they are spread in villages of India . . . moneylending . . . they are in S.E. Asia, Australia, . . . California . . . *The Pakhtun* is published to reach them throughout the world. . . . We shall bring home to every Pakhtun the real commandments of Islam, the spirit of the Quran and the correct path shown by Allah and His Prophet. Every Pakhtun should follow Islam in the right spirit and be worthy of the promise made to Him by the Al-Mighty.[16]

The message conveyed through *The Pakhtun* caught the imagination of the Pakhtun youth on both sides of the Khyber Pass, and elsewhere. Its message reflected their hopes and aspirations, and rekindled in them an awareness of their heritage. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was looked upon as a symbol

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of Pakhtun unity and solidarity, their torch bearer, their father, their king.

The movement could not observe its non-political and socio-religious code, as contained in its solemn oath, for long. Soon the founder of the movement found himself swept away by the tidal wave of the Indian National Congress, which made him turn his attention once more to Delhi. In the Lahore sessions of the Congress, the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, whose participation in the colourful Red Shirt uniforms was overwhelming and conspicuous, were overjoyed to see Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President, wearing a Pathan turban, while presiding over the deliberations. In that moment of spontaneous excitement, no Pakhtun could foresee the future course of history. But the significance of the momentous occasion was well-planned. A new alliance, a new axis was taking shape which would reveal itself in due course.

NOTES

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2. Waller, John H, *Beyond The Khyber Pass—The Road To The British Disaster In The First Afghan War*, New York, Random House, pp. 279-90.
3. Nanda, B R, op. cit., p. 21.
4. Ibid., p. 22.
5. Ghazali, Abdul Salam, 'N.W.F.P., In Search of A Name', *Dawn*, 2 February 1991.
6. Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, *Aap Biti* (Autobiography), Lahore, Rohtas Books, p. 27.
7. Ibid., p. 26.
8. Khalique, Harris, *Sindh Guardian*, 22 April 1991, p. 2.
9. Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, op. cit., p. 43.
10. Ibid., pp. 94-6.
11. Ibid., p. 97.
12. Ibid., p. 97.
13. Tendulkar, D G, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan—Faith is a Battle*, New Delhi, Gandhi Peace Foundation 1967. p. 59.
14. Ibid., p. 63.
15. Ibid., pp. 116-17.
16. Ibid., pp. 50-4.

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2

Indian National Congress

The event that marked the transformation of the socio-religious movement of the *Khudai Khidmatgars* into a political organization occurred almost immediately after the movement was born. The timing of the two events seemed to be programmed by the same mind. The annual session of the Indian National Congress was held in Lahore in December 1929, barely a month after the birth of the *Khudai Khidmatgars*. Among the thirty thousand delegates and spectators, a solid group came from the Frontier, led by Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The Congress presidentship passed from Pandit Motilal Nehru to his illustrious son, Jawaharlal Nehru. A Pathan turban was chosen as the new President's head gear, although a Punjabi head gear in Lahore should have been a logical choice. But since Pandit Nehru had never worn a provincial, regional, or ethnic head-gear ever, on similar occasions, either before or after the 1929 Lahore session, this gesture symbolised a landmark. 'The atmosphere was tense. The resolution passed called for civil disobedience, to achieve the independence of India.'[1] The Pathans saw independence round the corner and nothing could stop them from achieving it.

The appropriate scenario for Abdul Ghaffar Khan's entry into the Indian National Congress, was provided by (a) the coincidence of the birth of *Khudai Khidmatgars*, (b) the unparalleled enthusiasm displayed by his Red-Shirted followers, (c) the symbolic kinship between the sentimental Pathans and the turban-wearing Congress leadership, and d) the call for civil disobedience which appealed to the psyche of the Pathans, who had never accepted British supremacy, and whose defiant instinct against foreign occupation found an eloquent expression.

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Fortified by the Congress resolve, and backed by top Indian leadership, Abdul Ghaffar Khan toured most of the thirty thousand Frontier villages, as part of his drive to recruit *Khudai-Khidmatgars*-cum-Congressmen. Young men donned the red shirts, and vowed to follow their leader. Pledges were made to discard weapons and adopt *ahimsa* as the creed. Up till April 1930, there were only five hundred Red Shirts, but inspired by the Civil Disobedience Resolution of the Congress, the recruits swelled to 50,000 within a short period of six months. The movement engulfed the settled districts and reached the tribal territory.[2]

By 23 April 1930, Abdul Ghaffar Khan had been able to raise a sizeable un-armed non-violent army of Red-Shirt volunteers, for full participation in the civil disobedience. Only a signal was needed to move them into action. In the same month, Mahatma Gandhi declared to his followers that 'he was committing just a technical and ceremonial breach of the Salt Law, and not launching a full-fledged movement, and that it was open to his followers, to commit the technical and ceremonial breach of law, by manufacturing salt, and risk prosecution, according to their own conscience.' The movement spread to Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Lahore, Allahabad and Bombay. Peshawar did not lag behind. The 'entire population of Peshawar broke the salt laws.'[3] Whether the entire population of Peshawar manufactured salt, is questionable. Peshawar has never manufactured salt. It could only extract it out from the rocks, which were not located in Peshawar city. But it is true that demonstrations were organized on a large scale against the instructions of Gandhi. The demonstrations became threatening and violent, so much so, that unlike elsewhere in India, the Frontier was put under Martial Law from August 1930 till January 1931.[4]

The violent reaction of the Pathans, whether or not instigated by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and against the mandate and far exceeding the limits set by Gandhi, may have come as a surprise to Gandhi. However, it must have pleased the top Congress leadership. Here at last was their power base, from where they could hope to control the Frontier and look beyond the Khyber Pass. Party discipline was never a strong point with the Congress, particularly during the civil disobedience

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movements launched by them. Both Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan were imprisoned. These arrests caused agitation among the Pathans in general, who gave the following ultimatum to the British:

> Release Badshah Khan and Malang Baba (Gandhi) and stop the atrocities and repression against the Pakhtuns, otherwise we shall declare war on you. Also release Inqilab Zindabad (assuming that 'Inqilab Zindabad' was a leader, living in some corner of India).[5]

The ultimatum 'shook' London.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan has given a simple explanation for joining the Congress party to his biographer: 'While we were in Gujrat jail (as a result of the 1930 riots), Mian Jaffar Shah and others came to meet us. We requested them to visit Lahore, Delhi and Simla to inform the Muslim League leaders about the peoples' plight and seek their help in, at least, acquainting the outside world with the situation in the Frontier. In a couple of months, they again came to see us. They told us that the Muslim League leaders did not want to help us, because we resisted the Britishers, whom they were not prepared to oppose. They wanted to fight the Hindus. We had not joined the Congress till then. As a drowning man tries to catch hold of any straw—being thwarted by the Muslim League—we requested them to seek help from the Congress. The latter readily agreed to help us in every way, provided we joined them in the struggle for India's freedom. We asked them to convene the Provincial *Jirga* of the *Khudai Khidmatgars* to consider the Congress offer. The *Jirga* unanimously decided to stand by the Congress and publicly announced that they had decided to join the Congress.'[6]

This explanation which also appears in the Khan's autobiography, has been faithfully reproduced by his biographer, as narrated to him, without question, without scrutiny and without analysis. The Muslim League version is not available. However, Badshah Khan was in jail and his followers in the Frontier must have been under British pressure, following the Congress riots in 1930, to which the Muslim League was not a party. He sent emissaries to the Muslim League for help. If he did so, it was not a display of courage, conviction, Pathan

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pride or Pathan character. Rightly or wrongly, he had already put the Pathan turban or the mantle of Pathan leadership on the Congress. He should have had no association with the Muslim League, in fairness to Congress, and to his followers. Supposing Jaffar Shah had brought an encouraging message, would he have denounced the Congress and embraced the League? In that event, would the League have been certified by him to be a nationalist anti-British party? Secondly, he and his followers were in jail. Assuming he was uncommitted, he appears to have decided to bargain with the League and then with the Congress and, whichever of the two offered attractive terms, was his friend, and the other his enemy and therefore a British agent.

In the light of India's political history, his ancestral heritage, and in the interests of Pakhtuns living on either side of the Khyber Pass, did Badshah Khan make the right political decision? It is a matter of history that in 1929 Badshah Khan made two significant moves. One was a link-up with the Kabul throne to translate his ambition of pan-Pakhtunism into reality, and the other was the setting up of the Red Shirt organization to strive for that goal. Within a month, the entire scheme along with its apparatus was hijacked by the Congress, lock, stock and barrel. Within a few months, the *Khudai Khidmatgars* were on the streets of Peshawar—rioting. Their imprisonment followed inevitably. So, the die was cast. The Congress had acquired its most prized possession, and by blaming the Muslim League, he was only finding a scapegoat.

When this episode happened, the Indian political scene was almost reaching a boiling point.

In 1911, the Muslim League changed its pro-British stance under Jinnah's influence, and joined the Indian political mainstream, whereupon Abdul Ghaffar Khan attended the League's annual session in 1913. Also, Jinnah joined the Muslim League in 1913, once he became convinced that its goals were brought in line with those of the Congress. Jinnah welcomed Gandhi's emigration from South Africa to India, and he presided over the formal welcome meetings for Gandhi in Bombay. Jinnah had opposed the Muslim League's demand for separate electorates. When Gandhi advocated separate electorates and the Congress supported this Muslim demand, and the Lucknow

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Pact was signed by the Congress and the League, as a blue print for communal harmony, under the stewardship of Jinnah, only then did Jinnah become a supporter of separate electorates. But even thereafter, Jinnah continued to advocate joint electorates to achieve communal unity and India's integrity, provided certain constitutional safeguards for the minorities were provided.

By 1929, the year in which Badshah Khan joined the Congress, the mainstream of Indian Muslim political leaders, including Maulana Mohammed Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Jinnah, and many others, had quit the Congress after the realization that it was dominated by Hindu communalists and fanatics who were visibly influencing its policies. The communal leanings of Gandhi and other Congress leaders were criticized by Maulana Azad, Asaf Ali, Dr. Syed Mahmood. Maulana Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali equated the Congress with the *Hindu Mahasabha*. The Nehru Report had poured cold water over Muslim aspirations, and shattered the Congress-League co-operation achieved after the First World War. Jinnah announced his fourteen points, as a via media, in which point No. 13 demanded full provincial status for the Frontier. During the First World War, Gandhi had supported the British war effort, and Jinnah had opposed it.

By 1931, the Congress and the League had drifted far apart in their perceptions. It was naive of Badshah Khan to expect the League to oblige him and collect the ashes and the debris of the Congress Civil Disobedience movement, for which the Muslim League had neither been consulted nor involved. In any case, the Muslim League had no power or influence, comparable to that of the Congress. Organizationally, the Muslim League was a weak body in the early thirties. It had not yet developed into a mass movement. Its leadership had not filtered down to the middle class. Two decades before Badshah Khan had approached the League while Jinnah had kept aloof from it on the basis of issues, like separate electorates, and the absence of a national outlook. But even when staying away from the League, Jinnah did not condemn it; he did not term it a 'British stooge'; he did not call it 'anti-Hindu'. On the contrary, he groomed its nationalist status and image; he tried, and succeeded, in narrowing down the League-Congress gap,

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established a dialogue between them, on a continuing basis, and arranged the annual sessions at the same places and at the same times, to co-ordinate their stands and evolve a common strategy.

By contrast, Badshah Khan joined the Congress, almost overnight, without even attempting to analyse the factors that had created the gulf between the Muslim leaders, in and outside the League and the Congress. He was not a drowning man as he made himself appear. He was the undisputed leader of the Pakhtuns. His fame had grown as a Pakhtun leader. He did not need the Congres—the Congress needed him. He provided a link to Kabul and a spring board to the Hindu Kush.

Badshah Khan gave a simple explanation, while addressing a meeting, presided over by Mrs Kasturba Gandhi in 1931: 'I am greatly surprised that the very name of Congress scares away some of my Muslim Brothers. They think that the Congress is a Hindu organization, and that, therefore, they may have nothing to do with it. There never was a more incorrect description of a body which is essentially national in character. I appeal to my brethren to study the aims, objects, rules and constitution of the Congress. Briefly the Congress aims at liberating the people from slavery and exploitation, or, in other words, the Congress aims at being able to feed India's hungry millions and to clothe India's naked millions. I want you to read the history of Islam and ask you to consider what the Prophet's mission was. It was to free the oppressed, to feed the poor, and to clothe the naked. And, therefore, the work of the Congress is nothing but the work of the Prophet, nothing inconsistent with Islam. Seeing this as clearly as a day light, I really do not understand how Muslims can remain aloof from the Congress. We have been made familiar with the cry of Hindu rule—a rule of rich Hindu, of the educated Hindu, of the nationalist Hindu. To them I say, perhaps, it may be better to be slaves under a neighbour than under a perfect stranger.'[7]

This speech which was delivered not long after he was 'rebuffed' by the League casts doubts about his sincerity in his approach to the Muslim League.

In 1931, Devdas Gandhi visited the Frontier Province and found that the personality of Abdul Ghaffar Khan exercised a major influence on the Pathans. He found spinning wheels in

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most of the villages and was convinced that *Khadi* would soon replace foreign cloth.[8] Devdas seemed to have had only a superficial view of the Pathans, whose leader knew them better. Three years later, the Khan himself lamented in the annual session of the Congress that he had introduced the *Swadeshi* movement in the Frontier but the moment he went to jail, the people discontinued it—an admission that his followers did not adhere to his teachings very seriously.[9]

In the All-India Congress Committee meeting held in Bombay on 6 August 1931, the *Khudai Khidmatgars* were formally inducted as a Congress Volunteer Organization; their black flag was replaced by the Congress tri-colour flag but they were permitted to use their original name, which had become a popular symbol.[10] On 9 August 1931, Badshah Khan made an agreement with the Congress that the Frontier Afghan *Jirga* would be re-named as the Frontier Congress Committee, and he ratified the decision that the *Khudai Khidmatgars* would henceforth be Congress volunteers.[11]

As Congress volunteers, the Red Shirts dominated the political scene in the Frontier, in general, and the Peshawar valley, in particular. The British realised their influence during the elections held in 1932, which were boycotted owing to the Congress leaders being in jail. Pickets were organized at polling booths, hundreds of Pathan women appeared at the booths with the Holy Quran on their heads to persuade people not to vote. Demonstrations took place in many places, and the boycott was successful.

In 1934, the Congress leadership decided to refrain from breaking the law, as that had led to chaos, violence and breach of discipline. It was decided that rather than dissipating the energies in such fruitless and counter-productive efforts, they should concentrate on party consolidation and party discipline through mass contact, in which, no leader would court arrest. The only leader who violated party discipline was Abdul Ghaffar Khan. During the mass contact movement, he toured Bengal, Bihar, UP and Bombay. In Bombay he spoke to a group of Christians. On 7 December 1934, he was arrested for making a seditious and provocative speech. On earlier occasions, he had refused to offer defence, but this time, unlike all previous and subsequent occasions, under

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Gandhi's instructions, Bhulabhai Desai, the famous lawyer, defended him.

During the trial, the Khan did not plead 'guilty' or 'not guilty' to the charge. The magistrate presented him with an English translation of his speech in which he was alleged to have described the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, who were supposed to be non-violent, in a manner, which in the government's view incited violence. The magistrate asked him if the translation of his speech correctly represented his speech in Urdu. The Khan replied that he could not say if it did, since he was not pleading the charge. Then be submitted a written statement which is as follows:

> I have read the charge and a translation of my Hindustani speech. Whilst the general trend of the translation admits of much improvement, I admit the correctness of the main statement of my speech, which, my lawyer friends advise me, are capable of bringing it within the Clauses of the section under which I am charged. I am a loyal Congressman and have accepted its policy of not seeking arrest and imprisonment at the present moment. I had, therefore, no desire to utter words of sedition. I am, therefore, sorry that I made the statement in the speech, however unwittingly, which are open to exception from the prosecution point of view.[12]

Irrespective of the outcome of the trial (two years rigorous imprisonment) this episode reveals the Khan as being highly emotional, prone to pleasing crowds and displaying lack of party discipline. These attributes had often troubled Gandhi, his spiritual guide and political teacher. This, and similar other instances, of emotional reactions and exaggerated claims also eroded his credibility among his senior Congress colleagues like Pandit Nehru, Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel, particularly, as India's independence drew close. Nevertheless, he enjoyed a position of prestige and respect within the Congress.

Badshah Khan's imprisonment, despite his apology, which had hurt his pride, dignity and stature, as a leader of the Congress, caused dismay within Congress ranks. As a face-saving device, Sardar Patel appealed on 16 June 1934, to Sir Henry Craik, that, when a prisoner makes an unsolicited expression of regret for what he has done, it was not fair to punish him for his past declarations. In response, Sir Henry

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Craik wrote to the British Home Secretary, saying, 'If and when released, there is no doubt in my mind that, having regard to his fanatical nature, he will continue to make similar speeches. He can not, I think, restrain himself, even if he wants to.'[13] Mr Craik merely commented on the Khan's personality and made no recommendation. But Patel's appeal undoubtedly added an insult to the self-inflicted injury of the Khan, which left an indelible scar on his political career.

In the 1937 general elections, Abdul Ghaffar Khan's performance was way below expectations of the Congress central command who were anticipating a sweeping victory. Out of the thirty six Muslim seats, the Congress won fifteen seats, and in the Provincial Assembly of fifty, the Congress got nineteen seats. However, the Congress felt reassured by the fact that the Muslim League had not secured a single seat. Explaining his inability to carry the Frontier, Ghaffar Khan told the All India Congress Committee in Delhi, on 19 March 1937, that he did not feel dejected over the action of the Governor offering the Chief Ministership to Sir Abdul Qayyum. In July 1937, after the Congress agreed to form the ministries in Bombay, Madras, UP, Bihar, CP and Orissa, following the sorting out of differences with the Viceroy, the non-Congress members in the Frontier Assembly agreed to co-operate with the Congress, thus enabling the Congress to form a ministry under Dr Khan Saheb.[14]

The formation of a Congress ministry in the Frontier secured that Province for the Congress. The time was now appropriate for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the Frontier. The visit took place in October 1937. Overwhelmed by the enthusiastic welcome, Nehru responded, 'Abdul Ghaffar Khan was not only *Fakhr-e-Afghan*, he was the pride of India too. He came next only to Mahatma Gandhi in mass popularity. He was truly the symbol of India's heroism and courage. The freedom of India has no stouter soldiers, no braver defenders, and to have comrades like these is a joyous privilege and a rare delight.'

Nehru's impressions of his tour, as he related to Dr Rama Manohar Lohia, and published in the *Congress Socialist* were,

> I became intensely conscious of the unity of India . . . the Frontier people thought in terms of Indian unity . . . probably their thoughts were vague and could not bear any cross-examination. It is true

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> that they have a strong kinship with the people across the border, with the border tribes in the semi-independent area beyond India, and in Afghanistan. Even with the Afghans proper they have the feeling of kinship because of language and culture, but politically speaking they look very definitely to India . . . One thing is very apparent . . . though they are undoubtedly religious in a broad sense, they are far removed from bigotry. They are a very childlike people with the virtues and feelings of children . . . It is not very easy for them to intrigue and so, their actions have a certain simplicity and sincerity, which commands attention.[15]

Nehru's pen picture of the Pathans fitted perfectly with the personality of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who, as explained in the previous chapter, had undergone a change in his orientation from Pan-Pakhtunism to Indian nationalism, and was now in the process of indoctrination. For the Congress this was an encouraging development, but they needed to ensure that the Pathans were not influenced by any rivals. Accordingly, Nehru visited the Frontier again on 21 January 1938. He found receptive audiences in the settled districts and the tribal areas. He declared that the Congress would reverse the forward policy of the British with trans-border territories. He lauded the Fakir of Ipi for inviting him to visit his territory and to verify the truth of the British allegations against him. One tribal chief put his son at Nehru's feet. In Dera Ismail Khan he made a memorable speech:

> Frontier was the centre of Buddhist Empire, and a meeting place of three great cultures—the Indian, the Chinese and the Greco-Roman. Later, the Arabs suddenly rose to prominence and in one tremendous sweep of conquest, spread from China to Spain. They knocked at the doors of India but did not enter it. It is well to remember that Islam was India's friendly neighbour for hundreds of years without conquest or conflict. It was when Central Asian conquerors came to India as invaders that there was conflict. And this conflict was political, not religious, although it was exploited in the name of religion. Mahmood of Ghazni came as ruthless conqueror and looted India but how many people know that one of his best armies in Central Asia consisted of Indian and Hindu troops under a general named Tilak? It was across these frontier tracts that India sent her message of religion and art to the Far East, and so many pilgrims made a long journey to India in search of learning.[16]

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In Dera Ismail Khan, Nehru was not addressing a seminar of historians, intellectuals, professors and archaeologists. He was speaking to the spiritual heirs, the followers and kinsmen of those who might have looted and plundered India. Invasions from the north were a part of India's history and pre-history. All invaders, right from the Aryans, down to the Afghans, brought their own customs, cultures, and faiths.

Nehru spoke of the ruthless invaders from Afghanistan, including Mahmood Ghaznavi, who plundered India, and looted the temple of Somnath. Subsequent Afghan rulers settled in India, ruled it for hundreds of years but remained aliens and their cultural stream did not mix with the local stream. If anything, the hatred for the alien culture struck deeper roots. Governor-General Lord Ellenborough, in an attempt to mitigate residual bitterness in the Hindus and to create a positive image for the British, ordered General Nott, who had conquered Ghazni in September 1840, to dismantle the tomb of Mahmood Ghaznavi and bring back to India the 'Sandal wood gates of the Temple of Somnath,' which Ghaznavi had 'stolen' from the Temple eight hundred years earlier. While making the gracious gift of historical and religious significance to the Hindus, the Governor-General announced that the 'insult of eight hundred years is at last avenged.' But the Hindus rejected the gift, as it had been 'polluted by Muslim possession'. The gates were unceremoniously relegated to a warehouse in Agra.[17] What the British Empire builders could not achieve was almost out of reach of persuasive politicians. Nehru, only a year earlier, had spoken to the Pathans and their leadership, whom be found to be quite childlike and simple. However, this trip provided another opportunity to Nehru and the Pathans, to know and understand each other better. It created an urge among the Pathans to rediscover their heritage and see how it fitted with Nehru's analysis. The precise outcome of this mutual interaction was to reveal itself in the subsequent decade.

The Frontier Province was now a strong base of the Congress, and provincial affairs could therefore be safely left to the charge of Dr Khan Saheb. Abdul Ghaffar Khan had earlier (1934) accepted the position of a member of the Congress Working Committee, so as to play his rightful role at the all-India level. Although his elevation to that level was purely on the basis

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of his unchallenged political following in the Frontier, his consent to render services at a national level was influenced by Gandhi.[18] Understandably therefore, his perceptions about the national and international issues—like those of Gandhi—were markedly different from those of his other colleagues in the Congress high command. He tested the validity and wisdom of the decisions of the high command on the touchstone of *ahimsa*, and accepted or rejected them on that basis alone. Presumably, for this reason he had earlier turned down the offer of the presidentship of the Congress in the Bombay Annual Session.[19] Quite often, therefore, he found himself on the opposite side of the table from his colleagues.

His differences in approach and parameters of judgement surfaced off and on. In 1939 and 1940, he differed on the issue as to whether the Congress should or should not support the Allied war effort against Hitler. In the Congress Working Committee meeting in Wardha, in September 1939, the Congress Resolution, as presented, emphasized that the co-operation in the war effort had to be between equals, by mutual consent, for a cause which both considered to be worthy; that India could not associate itself in a war said to be fought for democratic freedom when that very freedom was denied to her. The Working Committee therefore called upon the British government to declare their war aims as to their application to India. The Working Committee also called upon Congress ministries in the provinces to resign in protest against India being declared as a belligerent country without her consent.[20]

Gandhi was sorry that the Working Committee had failed to take a non-violent attitude. He believed that the nation had not imbibed the spirit of non-violence requisite for possession of the strength which refrains from taking advantage of the difficulty of the opponent. He felt that the Congress could not honestly accept the real implications of non-violence, and that the vast majority of Congressmen had never clearly understood that in the event of danger from without, they were to defend the country by non-violent means alone. He complained that the Congressmen had no training in the use of non-violence to combat communal riots.[21]

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Addressing the AICC at Ramgarh, Bihar (March 1940) Abdul Ghaffar Khan condemned the Congress ministries in India, accusing them of gross corruption, and said, 'I doubt if we are worthy of the cause (independence) we are fighting for. The little power that came to us (1937-9) revealed in true colours those whom we considered angels. It is astounding, the amount of corruption I saw about me when we came to possess a little power . . .'[22]

The Working Committee met again in Wardha on 18 April 1940, and disagreed with Gandhi's demand that India must declare its unwillingness to maintain its armed forces to defend her freedom against external aggression and internal disorder. The Committee, in deference to Gandhi's creed, agreed that he should be free to pursue his great ideal in his own way, and therefore, absolved him from the responsibility for the programme and the activity which the Congress had to pursue. Gandhi responded that the Congress should try to do without him and hold their meetings in places other than Wardha.[23] Abdul Ghaffar Khan was in a dilemma as to whether to follow the line dictated by the inner voice of the Mahatma, or to support the reasoning advanced by the rest of his colleagues.

On 3 July 1940, Gandhi issued the following appeal to Britain:

> I appeal to every Briton, wherever he may be now, to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war. . . . I want you to fight Nazism without arms or, if I am to retain military terminology, with non-violent arms. I would like you to lay down the arms . . . as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Hitler and Mussolini to take what they want . . . Let them take possession of your beautiful island with your beautiful buildings. You will give all these, but neither your souls nor your minds. If these gentlemen want to occupy your houses, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourselves, man, woman and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them. . . .[24]

Gandhi's position generated a lengthy debate in the Congress high command. On the same day, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, addressed the Congress Working Committee in Delhi and said that in his opinion, the issue raised

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by Gandhi that India should have no armed forces, was irrelevant; that non-violence was a matter of policy, not of creed; and that his own view was that the Indians had the right to take to the sword if they had no other alternative. He revealed that the Working Committee was divided on this issue; that in the earlier stages, Nehru, Patel, Rajagopalachari and Abdul Ghaffar Khan had supported his (Azad's) viewpoint, while Rajendra Prasad, Acharya Kirpalani and Shankar Rao Deo had supported Gandhi's. He added that he was not prepared to envisage a free India without an army. Nehru said that the question was brought forward by Gandhi in the world context, as he wanted to place the message of non-violence before the world. Gandhi interrupted and clarified: 'Not exactly in the world context. I had only India before me.' Rajagopalachari said that he disagreed with Gandhi in his concept of the state. 'Ours is a political organization not working for non-violence but for the political idea. We are working in competition with other political parties,' concluded Rajaji. Nehru, agreeing with Rajaji, said that, otherwise 'we can not function on a political plane.'

At this stage, Gandhi gave a detailed discourse, propounding his theory, as all-embracing, including statecraft, based on *ahimsa*. Opposing the thesis, Nehru said, 'I appreciate what you say; we have a number of difficulties to face. How shall we deal with the lunatics who want to become Napoleons? They will upset the established world order. There will be continuous instability.' Azad, attempting to calm down opposition to Gandhi said, 'It is true that non-violence has not received a fair trial. Still, I think non-violence has worked miracles in India. This weapon was given to a weak, helpless country. It met with success but in an environment of weakness.' Rajaji responded, 'You have missed the point. The problem we are facing is how to run the state, and not how to mount to power. What you say comes to this: "We remain Brahmins and let *Keshatryas* rule." Realizing that the debate was wasting the Committee's time Nehru said, 'It sounds ridiculous for the Working Committee to associate itself with the appeal made by Gandhiji. I can understand Gandhiji issuing such an appeal. I have, however, no doubt that the appeal will fall flat on the Englishman. They simply will not be able to understand it.

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To their mind the appeal will be a source of strength to Hitler.' Rajaji insisted that Gandhi's draft appeal was far removed from reality and added forcefully, 'It is like living in a dreamland. We do not accept the conception. The question troubling us is Gandhiji's leadership. If we accept him as our leader, we accept his creed and programme.' Desai and Sardar Patel opposed Gandhi's approach. At this stage, Maulana Azad felt inclined to support Gandhi on the basis of his knowledge of Islamic history. He said, 'Gandhiji's logic is irresistible. We take up arms for defence but use them for aggression. This is what happened with Islam. The Prophet took up arms for sheer self-defence, but his followers used them for aggression and conquest. I think Gandhiji should resume leadership and not leave us in midstream.' Gandhi responded, 'I see there is a wide gulf between us, such that it can not be bridged. I have no impatience, no irritation in me. I must withdraw in the interest of Congress itself.'

Finally, a vote was taken to replace Gandhi's draft appeal with Rajaji's draft. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who had not participated in the discussion but listened to the arguments with patience, voted against Rajaji's draft. He also announced his resignation from the Working Committee. His explanation for resignation:

> Some recent resolutions of the Working Committee indicate that they are restricting non-violence to the fight for Indian freedom. How far and in what manner this will have to be applied in the future I can not say. The near future will perhaps throw more light on this. Meanwhile, it is difficult for me to continue in the Working Committee and I am resigning from it.
>
> Non-violence, which I believe in, and which I preach to the *Khudai Khidmatgars* is much wider. It affects all our life, and, only that has a permanent value. Unless we learn this lesson fully, we shall never do away with the deadly feuds which have been the curse of the people of the Frontier. We have largely succeeded in ending these feuds. Pathans have profited from non-violence much more.

To the Khan's explanation Gandhi added: 'In a storm that shook most of the members of the Working Committee, Abdul Ghaffar Khan stood firm as a rock. He had never any doubt about his position. I do not know, how far he has succeeded

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in carrying his message to his people. I know that non-violence is a matter, not of intellectual conviction, but of intuitive faith with him. He derives *ahimsa* from the Holy Quran. He is a devout Musalman.'[25]

The Khan did not stay aloof for long. In the All India Congress Committee meeting held in Bombay on 15 September 1941, Gandhi resumed the leadership and, consequently, Abdul Ghaffar Khan withdrew his resignation. On 23 December 1941, Abdul Ghaffar Khan addressed the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli and said:

> I must confess that I am no politician. I do not understand legalities. I know nothing of diplomacy. I am in the Working Committee because friends want me in it. I want the freedom of India, and with me, non-violence is not a policy but a permanent creed. To my mind it is a positive and dynamic force and it is the only path which will save the Pathan from servility and self-destruction. Active non-violence is the key to India's salvation, and, therefore, for me no participation not only in this war but in any war.

Badshah Khan was quite candid and he knew well why he was in the Congress high command—firstly, he was there because he accepted Gandhi's stand on issues without question; and secondly, perhaps more importantly, because he came from a province which was entirely Muslim, and no Hindu could challenge his position in the Frontier or replace him. In arriving at this conclusion one is forced to take into account the bitter experiences narrated by Maulana Azad who has recorded his dissent at the fate of Mr Nariman in Bombay and Dr Syed Mahmud in Bihar, both of whom had to bow out of their positions as soon as Gandhi found suitable Hindu substitutes.

The Lahore Resolution (1940) of the Muslim League calling for autonomous and sovereign status of Muslim homelands in the north-west and north-east of India marked a watershed in the transformation of the Pathan mind. With the spread of higher education the Pathans began to take stock of their political orientation and reassess their leanings. Leaders of public opinion, centres of religious learning and tribal chiefs, particularly those not wholly or partly committed to the Khan brothers, entered the political arena, with a message different from the one preached by Badshah Khan. More and more Pathans became

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aware of the history of the origin of *Khudai Khidmatgars*, created to unite the Pakhtun nation, to revive its glory, and to guide its destiny under a socio-religious programme, and of the fact that it was merged with the Indian nationalist movement under the influence of a creed which was preached in the name of Islam and its Prophet (PBUH). The new generation of the Pathans saw these apparent contradictions in the origin of the movement, in its transformation, and in its creed and faith. If the Pakhtuns began to organize in 1929 to achieve a Pakhtun national status, how could they do so through the Indian National Congress? They could not reconcile *ahimsa* with the teachings of Islam. Nor could they reconcile it with their own history. They found the movement to be based on blind faith in a single individual, namely, Gandhi.

Then there was Nehru's historic visit. He not only reminded the Pathans of their barbaric past, but excluded Islam from their heritage. Pathans had failed to react then under the magic spell of Badshah Khan, who seemed to have tamed them for a while to the point of submission. But unmistakably, the visit had left bitter memories, too deep for the Khan brothers to fathom.

Educated Pathans, capable of independent judgement, began to see many contradictions between the words and deeds of Congress leaders. They became aware that Azad, Nehru, Patel and others subscribed to *ahimsa*, not as a faith, but as an expediency; that Azad and other Muslim scholars did not consider *ahimsa* as a centre-piece of Islamic teachings and that all non-violent non-co-operation movements launched by Gandhi invariably turned violent. They were shocked to know that their leader, Gandhi, had advised the British to surrender to Hitler and that he envisaged an independent India without any armed forces to defend its frontiers. What opened their eyes was the realization that they had been led into the Congress via an Islamic route, and not via a secular route. They were also aware that fanatic Hindu communalists had infiltrated the Congress, and some of the top leaders of the Congress, including Gandhi and Patel, quite often took a communal view of Indian politics. As long as the Pathans were kept insulated from the Indian mainstream by projecting their Pakhtun personality, they were insulated from harsh realities, and as such, they could be taken

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for granted as the potential guardians of India's north-west frontier. But once they entered the Indian political mainstream and got the opportunity to associate with the Muslims of other provinces, the bitter reality dawned on them. They began to see the problems of the Indian Muslims, the discrimination and the intolerance practised on the basis of religion. It was only natural that the Pathans began to show better understanding of the aspirations of Muslim India.

This was a slow development but its outcome was sure. No student of Indian politics could have come to a different conclusion. Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Azad came to the same conclusion and they accepted this reality. But, understandably, Badshah Khan did not accept this reality. He was convinced that the Pathans themselves did not turn the tables on him but the tables were turned by the British, by the *mullahs* hired by the British, and by the Muslim League created, nourished and propelled by the British. The rejection of the Congress by the Pathans is perhaps one of the most important chapters in the history of Indian independence. Many authors have given their versions. I propose not to give the version of Muslim Leaguers, even though that has been vindicated by history, but to give the version of Badshah Khan, as explained in an elaborate manner by Wali Khan, and to add to that, the version of the Congress President.

In *Facts are Facts* Wali Khan claims that the British helped lay the foundation of the Muslim League in Abbottabad in September 1937 with the help of *mullahs*, later helped by nawabs, sirs and honorary magistrates. The *mullahs* were paid subsidies to speak against the Germans and Russians and to convince the Fakir of Ipi to call off the *jihad* against the British. He quotes from Governor Cunningham's undated diary: 'I have not been in touch with any smaller *mullahs* myself. I have done it through . . . Ghulam Hyder of Sherpao told me that . . . he could work through nine or ten *mullahs*'.

Another extract from the Governor's undated diary . . . 'Maulvi Barkatullah of Asmos . . . comes to see me once or twice a year. . . . He could also do a good deal through ten or twelve Maulvis . . . throughout Bajaur Mohmand country . . . I paid him Rs. 1,000.'[26] He claims that a lot of work was accomplished through *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind*,[27] and that *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind*,

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at their annual general meeting (date and place not given), declared that if Russia attacked Afghanistan, it was the duty of all Muslims to join the *Jihad* against them. When the fear of Russia subsided, they were advised to modify anti-Bolshevik propaganda and concentrate more on propaganda against Germany and Italy.[28]

More from the Governor's diary (undated) *'Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind* toured Kohat, Peshawar and Mardan in June-July 1942 doing propaganda on Islamic, anti-Axis and anti-Congress and pro-Pakistan theme.'[29] The author comments that it was humiliating that the interpreters of religion sold their conscience and bartered Islam. But he praises these British stooges later, when he says that, 'along with Congress organization, there existed a patriotic and learned Muslim religious Jamaat.'[30] Indeed there did exist such a Jamaat, called the *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind*, whom Wali Khan condemns repeatedly as being a British stooge, in the Frontier Province, and praises it as being anti-British at the national level.[31]

In the forties, the political wind had started blowing in the opposite direction. Wali Khan accuses Governor Cunningham of using *mullahs* and Khans to oppose the Congress and quotes from his diary of 24 August 1943: 'The success of Muslim League in these by-elections was generally accepted as being the victory of the British government over the subversive elements in the Country.'[32] On Sardar Abdur Rab's joining the Muslim League, Wali Khan relies upon the diary of Iskandar Mirza, then Deputy Commissioner, who 'called him and appealed to him in the name of Islam to join the League. Nishtar did the needful.' He then quotes Cunningham's diary of 9 July 1943, 'Aurangzeb (Chief Minister) is extremely amenable and anxious to do what I want.' Then from the diary of 24 May 1944, 'Name of Muslim League Ministry is simply mud now-a-days owing to scandalous way in which they buy votes.' It seems that the author considers the British Governor a fair person, as he did not help Aurangzeb when he lost a no-confidence motion in the Assembly.

Finally Wali Khan quotes from Iskandar Mirza's auto-biography, which revealed 'a dangerous plan' of Jinnah's for the Frontier. 'Jinnah called Mirza in February 1947 and told him that he was afraid that he was not getting Pakistan through negotiation unless serious trouble was created . . . in NWFP and

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adjacent tribal areas, to show Muslim anger at the power being transferred to the Congress.' He wanted Mirza 'to resign, go to tribal territory and start a *jihad* in the shape of tribal raids, in the border villages of the settled areas in Waziristan, Tirah and Mohmand Country. Mirza estimated the operation would cost one crore rupees. Jinnah had arranged a cover job with Khan of Kalat and the money was to be provided by the Nawab of Bhopal. In May 1947 Jinnah called back Mirza and told him that the plan was abandoned, as Pakistan would be conceded.'[33]

In summary, the loss of Frontier to the Khan brothers has been ascribed to the following elements: The creation and encouragement of the Muslim League by the British civil servants; propaganda by religious leaders and exploitation of Islam; financial help from the government treasury; and to the nawabs, chiefs and Khans who threw their weight behind the League.

The evidence in support of these assertions includes a few diaries of the Governor, a biography of a civil servant, and the author's personal opinion. The evidence is weak and does not stand the test of history. Wali Khan lost sight of the fact that the Congress was itself established in 1885 with the help of a British civil servant; that Indian civil servants had mostly become partisan (Hindus supporting Congress and Muslims supporting Muslim League) as admitted by Prime Minister Atlee in the House of Commons; that the Muslim religious elites of India, including the *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind*, the *Ahrars*, and *Jamaat-e-Islami*, were vehemently opposed to the Muslim League; that the Pakistan movement was spearheaded mostly by the liberal and secularly oriented Muslims; that the accusation that Pathan religious leaders accepted British money to propagate Pakistan is not borne out by evidence and is an insult to the Pathans. He has also overlooked the flow of Hindu capitalist money funnelled into the Frontier through the Congress channel, but rejected by the Pathans. What Wali Khan has implied is that the Pathans lacked the ability to sift right from wrong or identify themselves with the Indian Muslim struggle by their free will, but were led into doing so through bribes, corruption and disinformation. If the Pathan nawabs, Khans and chiefs supported the Muslim League, how could anyone question their right to do so, particularly, when

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hundreds of thousands of wealthy Hindu financial tycoons and almost the entire population of high caste Hindus supported the Congress?

A more balanced view of the switchover in the loyalty of the Pathans was taken by the Congress high command, since the Frontier was their trump card and a show piece of the only solid Muslim support to the Congress. The changes that were taking place in the fortunes of the Congress in the Frontier were a source of anxiety to Maulana Azad who was Congress President. The depth of his perception may be seen in the following narrative:

> In the latter half of October 1946, Nehru took a step which was unnecessary and which I . . . opposed . . . He often works on impulse . . . Sometimes he makes up his mind without taking all facts into consideration . . . He tends to go ahead regardless of . . . consequences . . . The NWFP had an overwhelming majority of Muslims. Both in 1937 and since 1946, the ministry was dominated by the Congress. Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his *Khudai Khidmatgars* were mainly responsible for this happy state of affairs. In fact we had become accustomed to depend upon Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr Khan Saheb in all matters concerning the Frontier Province. Gandhiji used to say, sometimes jokingly, that the Khan brothers were the keepers of his conscience on Frontier questions.
>
> Soon after the interim government was formed, Jawaharlal issued order for stopping aerial bombardment of tribesmen in South Waziristan. In the meantime he was receiving official reports that a large section of the people in the Frontier was against Congress and the Khan brothers. Local officers repeatedly said that Congress had largely lost local support and the people had transferred their loyalty from Congress to Muslim League. Jawaharlal was of the view that the reports were not correct and were fabricated by British officers who were against the Congress. Lord Wavell did not agree with Nehru though he did not accept official reports in toto. His view was that the Frontier was almost equally divided between the Khan brothers and the Muslim League. Congress impression was that they had overwhelming support.
>
> When I heard this I told him that he should not take any hasty action. It was difficult to know what the exact situation in the Frontier was. There were factions in every province and there was bound to be a group opposed to the Khan brothers. Nehru had just assumed office and not yet consolidated his position. His tour

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at this stage would give the dissidents an opportunity of organizing their opposition to Congress. Since majority of the officials were also against the Congress, they would sympathize with, if not actively support, those opposition elements. It would therefore be better if he postponed his visit but Nehru insisted and said that whatever be the consequences, he would go.

Khan brothers . . . had exaggerated the extent of their influence . . . They also wished to impress us that while there were differences in other provinces, the Frontier was solidly with Congress. In fact, however, there was a powerful group against the Khan brothers. Dr Khan Saheb's term of office as Chief Minister had given additional strength to such opposition. He had the opportunity of winning over the entire province, but he committed some mistakes which added [to the] strength of his opposition. Some of these mistakes were purely of a personal and social nature. The Frontier Pathan is famous for his hospitality . . . Nothing alienates a Pathan more than miserliness and lack of generosity. Unfortunately, in this respect, Khan brothers fell very short of the expectation of their followers.

[The] Khan brothers were rich but miserly. They would not offer even a cup of tea. This even extended to the funds at their disposal. During general elections, Congress placed large amounts at their disposal but [the] Khan brothers spent little. Many candidates lost elections for lack of funds. When they came to know that funds were lying with Khan brothers, these men became bitter enemies.

On one occasion, a large deputation from Peshawar came to see me in Calcutta in connection with election funds. As it was tea time, I offered them tea and biscuits. Several members of [the] deputation looked at the biscuits with surprise. One took up a biscuit and asked me its name. They seemed to enjoy the biscuit and then told me that they had seen such things in Dr Khan Saheb's house but he had never offered these or even a cup of tea to any of them . . .[34]

Bacha Khan has refuted the charge of miserliness, as being one of the causes of the Congress debacle in NWFP. He says the 'Maulana visited the Frontier, enjoyed Pathan hospitality and social equality many times; the *Khudai Khidmatgars* was also a socio-economic moral and spiritual movement; the Congress fund was forbidden to them; the fund must have been provided to Frontier Parliamentary Board ... its non-utilization made no difference to Congress popularity. Before independence we ruled

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the province. After partition our popularity has not been tested.'[35] By returning the election campaign funds Bacha Khan showed the moral integrity and political strength of his followers. Azad did not question the moral integrity. The Congress spent millions on the election campaign, and more lavishly in the Muslim majority provinces. Saving campaign funds could not be a proof of integrity. If it was, then the Congress leadership in the rest of India, by implication, was of questionable integrity. As for the popularity test, the opportunity was denied to all parties in Pakistan for a long time. But when put to the test, the party that stood for Pakistan (Muslim League) and the party of Bacha Khan (NAP) suffered serious setbacks in the 1970, 1988 and 1990 elections. Wali Khan himself lost in 1990. Had Bacha Khan been alive today, he would have been shocked at the wealth invested in elections by most candidates, including his followers.

Azad has been frank, forthright and unsparing in his comments on the political conduct of his Congress colleagues and on their personal conduct in so far as it impinged on their political performance. The Khan brothers are not the only leaders taken by him to task. He has exposed Gandhi's communal predisposition in promoting Patel and Rajendra Prasad in preference to their senior and superior Parsi and Muslim colleagues. He disagreed with Gandhi on the issue of exploiting *ahimsa* to the point of absurdity. He has spoken about Nehru's impulsive and romantic tendencies influencing his political judgements. He has condemned Patel for his anti-Muslim behaviour and for his deliberate neglect in providing security to Gandhi who was under threat of murder. He valued their association and friendship, nevertheless. Why would he invent false stories of miserliness and inefficiency in utilising election campaign funds against the Khan brothers? After all, he was the Congress President, and his assessment is based on authoritative evidence.

Azad goes on:

> The actual position in 1946 was that the Khan brothers did not enjoy as much support in Frontier as we in Delhi thought. When Jawaharlal reached Peshawar, this discovery came to him as an unpleasant shock. Dr Khan Saheb was the Chief Minister. . . .When

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> Jawaharlal landed at the airport, he found thousands of Pathans massed there with black flags and shouting anti-Congress slogans. Dr Khan Saheb and other ministers who had come to receive him were themselves under police protection and proved completely ineffective. As Nehru came out, slogans were raised against him and some people in the mob wanted to attack his car. Dr Khan Saheb was so worried that he took out his revolver and threatened to shoot.[36]

This incident caused embarrassment to Abdul Ghaffar Khan who called a press conference and explained,

> this frontier affair is one of the mysteries of the world. Even Pandit Nehru can not see much under the circumstances. But as Head of External Affairs, he can see for himself the intrigues of (the) political department. All this has been manoeuvred by the political department. Besides, there are others whom I do not want to name, who did not like Nehru visiting the heart of the tribal territory. Since Nehru has the audacity to flout their wishes they wished to teach him a lesson.[37]

Abdul Ghaffar Khan was known for his courage and fearlessness, which were further strengthened by his faith in *ahimsa*. And yet, he was unable to name the agency, which did not want Nehru to visit the Frontier, perhaps, due to political expediency.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Indian biographer, has supported Maulana Azad's version:

> On 16 October 1946, five thousand Muslim League volunteers, headed by Abdul Qaiyum (who had recently resigned from Congress) lined the road, leading to the entrance to the aerodrome. Dr Khan Saheb became worried, so he took out his revolver and threatened to shoot. The crowds gave way.[38]

Neither Azad nor Tendulkar has alleged that the anti-Nehru demonstration, which was unexpected, unprecedented and shocking, ever became violent. Had they contemplated violence, the result could have been horrible. The crowd remained unperturbed even under the threat of violence by Dr Khan Saheb, who waved his revolver at them. And yet, the non-violent Chief Minister could not maintain a cool posture, lost his temper, and threatened to shoot.

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The Congress ruled the Frontier but was intolerant of protest or dissent, however peaceful. The Congress could hold demonstrations throughout India all the time when not in power. The Congress tried to justify its reaction by saying that the demonstration was organized by the Muslim League, which was a British stooge. The reality was, that by the time Nehru visited the Frontier, the Muslim League had made inroads into the province and caused deep cracks within the Congress ranks, leading to large scale defections. It is beyond comprehension that thousands of Pathans could be hired by the political department to demonstrate against Nehru. This was a bitter pill which the Congress could not swallow. Hence the panic-stricken behaviour of its leaders.

> The next day Nehru left for a tour of the tribal areas. He found everywhere a section of the people against him. The Maliks of Waziristan were largely responsible for the demonstration against him. In some places, his car was stoned and one stone hit Jawaharlal on his forehead. Dr. Khan Saheb and his colleagues seemed completely helpless.[39]

Abdul Ghaffar Khan's own version of Nehru's tour has been given in detail by his Indian biographer Tendulkar, who says,

> On 17 October 1946, Nehru went to Miran Shah in North Waziristan. Waziris shouted, 'we do not want Hindu Raj.' They made it clear that Waziris would not tolerate any interference with their independence. They recognized neither Congress nor Muslim League and they wanted to be left alone to lead their own lives as they thought best. Abdul Ghaffar told them, 'we want to help you in achieving complete independence. We are keen to help you and make you our friends.' Two hostile, demonstrations in one day from tribal jirgas at Miran Shah and Razmak brought from Nehru the remark that 'they were poor representatives of Frontier people.' Dr Khan Saheb asserted that *Jir*gas were handpicked by political department. From Waziristan Nehru was taken to Tank and Jandola where the political agent was a Hindu and the reception was warm. Next day to Khyber where the political agent was a Muslim. When they reached Jamrud, tribesmen waved shoes at them. At Landi Kotal they were stoned. The (Muslim) Political Agent stopped the car and his guards fired at the crowd. An English photographer was hurt. Next day they went to Malakand. Nehru was advised by the Khan to cancel it because the Political Agent Shaikh

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> Mahbubali (Muslim) was a dangerous man. Nehru insisted. At Malakand, the *Khudai Khidmatgars* alerted them to be cautious. The Political Agent (Muslim) was trying to please Dr Khan Saheb 'who could not resist flattery.' . . . . As soon as they stepped out of the Fort, they were stoned by a crowd. A truck blocked the road. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was hurt. Dr Khan Saheb took out his pistol. The crowd dispersed. 'The Britishers did not protect us.' At Dargai they were stoned by a big crowd. Someone threw filth which hit Dr Khan Saheb, who was responsible for all the trouble. Next day it was Sardaryab. *Khudai Khidmatgars* had arranged for security. Followers of Pir of Manki Sharif 'under British instructions' attacked but opposed by *Khudai Khidmatagars*. Next day, at Sardaryab, glowing tributes were paid to Nehru, who returned the compliment.[40]

All in all, Nehru's visit was a mixed affair. He saw the tide turning against the Khan brothers. In Waziristan the tribesmen argued with Nehru, so they were dubbed as unrepresentative. A Hindu Political Agent arranged a warm reception. At Khyber, the Muslim Political Agent arranged a hostile reception. At Malakand, another Muslim Political Agent flattered the Congress Chief Minister. Dr Khan has been blamed by the Congress and by Tendulkar. The British have been blamed by Bacha Khan. Growing opposition to the Congress has been admitted by Azad:

> In the Congress Working Committee meeting on 3 June 1947, Gandhiji spoke openly in favour of partition. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was completely stunned and for several minutes he could not utter a word. He appealed and reminded that he had always supported Congress. If the Congress now deserted him, the reaction in the Frontier would be terrible. He was not even consulted before Congress had agreed to partition! Frontier would consider it as an act of Congress treachery to *Khudai Khidmatgars*. Gandhiji promised to speak to the Viceroy. The Viceroy promised to speak to Jinnah to give fair treatment to Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Jinnah wished to meet the Khan. They met but in vain which was not surprising . . . Mountbatten proposed plebiscite in Frontier to Dr Khan Saheb. The elected Chief Minister claiming majority support could not object . . . (but) raised a new issue . . . that Frontier should have the right to opt for Pakhunistan—a State of the Pathans. The fact was that Khan brothers were not as strong in the Frontier as the Congress had thought. Their influence had waned after the agitation for partition began. Now that Pakistan was in sight . . . an emotional upheaval swept through the Frontier.[41]

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NOTES

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3. Ibid., p. 66.
4. Ibid., p. 73.
5. Ibid., p. 74.
6. Ibid., p. 76.
7. Ibid., p. 95.
8. Ibid., pp. 108-9.
9. Ibid., p. 182.
10. Ibid., p. 112.
11. Ibid., p. 112.
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13. Ibid., p. 208.
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15. Ibid., pp. 222-3.
16. Ibid., p. 228.
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27. Ibid., p. 65.
28. Ibid., p. 66.
29. Ibid., p. 68.
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34. Azad, Abul Kalam, *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 180-2.
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37. Tendulkar, D G, op. cit., p. 384.
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39. Azad, Abul Kalam, *India Wins Freedom*, p. 182.
40. Tendulkar, D G, op. cit., pp. 390-1.
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3

Bacha Khan and Mahatma Gandhi

The cult of *ahimsa* may have been rooted in the philosophy of ancient India but its use as a political weapon was introduced in India by Gandhi. After his arrival from South Africa, he participated in the activities of the Home Rule League, whose top leadership included Mohammed Ali Jinnah. The First World War had begun in Europe. The British were anxious for prominent Indian rulers to mobilise public opinion, help the war effort and participate in the recruitment drive. If the leaders could be won over, the recruitment would be smooth and spontaneous. The response of Gandhi and Jinnah to the recruiting campaign are worthy of mention, particularly in the context of the British attitude to granting Home Rule, and Gandhi's cult of *ahimsa*.

Governor Willingdon of Bombay convened his provincial war conference on 10 June 1918. Addressing the Governor in the Conference, Jinnah said, '. . . if you wish to enable us to help you to facilitate and stimulate the recruitment, you must make the educated people feel that they are the citizens of the Empire and King's equal subjects. But the government does not do so. You say that we shall be trusted and made real partners in the Empire. When? We don't want words . . . we want action and immediate deeds.'[1] Again on the Home Rule Day, 16 June 1918, Jinnah addressed a mass rally in Bombay, 'they (the bureaucrats) do not trust us and are not prepared to allow us to take up arms for the defence of our own motherland . . . they want us to continue . . . the army which is a sepoy army and nothing else, and then they turn and tell us that we are not helping them. I say . . . that the government

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of India is too wooden, too iron, too antidiluvian to be of any use for the modern purpose we have in view.'[2]

Less than a month later, Gandhi wrote to urge Jinnah to 'make an emphatic declaration regarding recruitment,' arguing, 'Can you not see that every Home Rule Leaguer became a potent recruiting agent whilst at the same time fighting for the constitutional rights, we should ensure the passing of the Congress-League Scheme . . . "Seek ye first the recruiting office and everything will be added unto you"'[3]. This was one of Gandhi's strangest letter and appears to have left Jinnah too shocked to respond. Gandhi came to appreciate the wisdom of Jinnah's position on recruitment as soon as he started going from village to village in Gujrat, to the beat of a soldier's tin drum.

> As soon as I set about my task my eyes were opened. My optimism received a rude shock. We had meetings wherever we went. People did attend but hardly one or two offered themselves as recruits. 'You are a votary of *ahimsa*. How can you ask us to take up arms? What good has government done for India to deserve our co-operation?'These and similar other questions used to be put to us[4]. I very nearly ruined my constitution . . . my illness was bound to be . . . possibly fatal. . . . Vallabhai Patel brought the news that Germany had been defeated and . . . the Commissioner (under whose instructions the recruitment was conducted) has sent a word that recruitment was no longer necessary. . . . The news came to me as a great relief.[5]

Abdul Ghaffar Khan was at the prime of his youth, watching the Afghan scene west of the Khyber, and the Indian scene, including the recruitment drive by Gandhi, and its opposition by Jinnah, east of the Indus. That was the time when Gandhi and Jinnah were both Home Rule Leaguers, mutually tolerant, both the Congress and the League were also on the same political wave length, thanks to the atmosphere of mutual accommodation, based on trust and confidence, free from rancour. Both considered each other patriotic, nationalist, and inter-dependent. None of them was labelled a British agent, or anti-Muslim or anti-Hindu. Had Abdul Ghaffar Khan chosen to join Indian politics, that was the most appropriate time, and his choice of any of the two main parties of India, would have

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been a source of strength to the other. But at that time, his priorities were different, his interest in Indian politics had not been aroused, and his preoccupation was religious, as had become obvious from his preliminary contacts with the Islamic divines at Deoband. If any power could deflect his attention from the Afghan scene, which had possessed his mind and absorbed his vision, it had to have a deep and profound religious and spiritual motivation. That power was personified in the magnetic personality of Gandhi, who gave a new meaning, a new face and a new interpretation to the cult of *ahimsa*. He made *ahimsa* the centrepiece, the very essence, and the ultimate goal of all the existing and past religions. He made the very existence of human race contingent upon its total, unconditional submission to *ahimsa*. What most impressed Abdul Ghaffar Khan was the conviction, conveyed to him through spiritual interaction with Gandhi, that *ahimsa* was in perfect harmony with Islam and what the Holy Quran taught and what Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) practised, was *ahimsa*. A deeply religious man himself, Abdul Ghaffar Khan was overwhelmed by the simplicity, humility, devotion, sense of commitment and the style of prayer of Gandhi. He embraced the creed in 1929.

Once adopted, the new faith took total possession of Ghaffar Khan's body and soul for the rest of his life. He converted hundreds of thousands of his Pathan followers to this creed, to varying degrees of their convictions. Within a decade, the spread of the new creed had changed the entire face, and along with it, the political scene of the Frontier Province. Islam must have taken much longer to convert the Pathans, despite the power of the sword backing the effort when it rammed its way through the Khyber Pass. While the world watched in bewilderment, the cult of *ahimsa* assumed instant popularity. It was beyond the wildest dreams of the prophet of *ahimsa*, Gandhi, and its ardent exponent Abdul Ghaffar Khan, that the very abrupt and instant popularity of *ahimsa* in the Frontier bred the seeds of its own undoing, much like the swing of a pendulum, from one extreme to the other.

In the decade of the forties, *ahimsa* had already begun to wear out. By 1947, *ahimsa* made its final and unceremonious exit from the Frontier, as did its parent body from the soil of India—the soil of its birth. An attempt is made here to make an in-

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depth study of *ahimsa*, as a cult, its genesis, its motivations, its manifestations, its application by the rulers and the ruled, its implications to national and international relations, and its impact on its disciples belonging to various shades—the intellectual elites, the religious elites, the political activists; by people of various dispositions, whether calm, humble or ferocious; by opportunists, exploiters and simple folks; by urban, rural and tribal people; by the followers of various faiths and creeds, and finally, by various social groups, classes and the caste structure in the Indian society. It would then be easier to put in perspective the rise and fall of *ahimsa* in the Frontier, and indeed, in India.

The movement was founded by Gandhi in 1920 with two clear aims: first, non-co-operation with the alien rulers, and, second, constructive social programme, comprising the achievement of communal unity, abolition of untouch-ability, prohibition of liquor, eradication of drugs, and economic self-reliance through propagation of *khadi* and other cottage industries. These components of *ahimsa* were to be adopted as a whole package, and not bit by bit, not merely as a political expediency (to achieve independence) but as an integral programme for life. *Ahimsa* was timeless.

Ahimsa, as defined by Gandhi, was adopted as the official creed of the *Khudai Khidmatgars*. 'On 26 March 1931 during the Karachi Congress session, Abdul Ghaffar Khan gave an invitation to Gandhi on behalf of the Afridi tribe, to visit the Frontier and indoctrinate the tribesmen into the new faith. The Khan himself entered the Swaraj Ashram in Bardoli for the same purpose. The Ashram inmates were naturally inquisitive about the new converts—the Pathans—to their faith. Abdul Ghaffar Khan assured them, 'I am sure we shall prove to be the best disciples of Gandhiji in the whole of India. We are prepared for any amount of suffering. I want Gandhiji to come into direct touch with my people in the Frontier. He must come there and speak to the people and give them his instructions. . . . God willing, I hope never to see my province take to violence. . . . We indeed have abundance of violence in our nature. . . . It may be that I may fail and a wave of violence may sweep our province. I will then be content to take the verdict of the fate against me. But it will not shake my

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ultimate faith in *ahimsa* which my people need more than anybody else.'[6]

The Khan claimed to have been led up the path of *ahimsa* by his faith in Islam. In a meeting presided over by Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi in 1931 he explained, 'then we came to the creed of non-violence. There is nothing in a Muslaman or a Pathan like me, subscribing to the creed. It was followed fourteen hundred yeas ago by the Prophet, all the time he was in Mecca and it has since been followed by all those who wanted to throw off the oppressor's yoke.'[7] In the same year, delivering a sermon in a mosque in Rustom (NWFP) he said that a non-violent war meant a kind of war, 'your ancestors fought fourteen hundred years ago. If you fail to fight this war how will you answer to God and the Prophet on the Day of Judgement?'[8]

In November 1931, he spoke in the village of Jatho (NWFP) and said, 'Remember that Muslims alone are not the creatures of God. Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Jews, Christians and Parsis, in short all the creatures that live in this world, are the creatures of God. The mission of *Khudai Khidmatgars* is to give comfort to all creatures of God. They will stand against a tyrant, whether he is a Hindu, a Muslim, or an Englishman. I am giving you a weapon that the army will not be able to stand against. It is a weapon of the Prophet but you are not aware of it—the weapon of patience and righteousness, of non-violence. No power on earth can stand against this weapon.'[9]

In 1931, a despatch in the *Daily Mail* had said that 'the Frontier is an outpost of the Soviet Republic . . . the spearhead of an attack on India . . . with Russian gold pouring in across the Khyber Pass . . . the Muslims being armed by Russian weapons . . . their leader is the terrible Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a jail bird and relentless enemy of the British.' But Robert Bernays, a liberal British MP and the author of the *Naked Fakir* looked at the Khan from a positive angle, 'Abdul Ghaffar Khan, looking the embodiment of the traditional Christ, spoke: "I have no connection with Russia. The British have put me in prison but I do not hate them." A.G. Khan is a kindly, gentle and rather lovable man. *Khudai Khidmatgars* were thoroughly peaceful; not a single definite charge of violence against them was proved. This rapid growth of a disciplined movement near the turbulent

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frontier, closely allied to the Indian national movement, thoroughly upset the Frontier Government.'[10]

In 1932, a delegation led by Bertrand Russell prepared a report on the Frontier, which said, 'The severity of repression has produced something like a war on the Frontier Province. Though the display of force on the British side is overwhelming, no British official claimed that the Movement had yet been crushed. That non-violence against the persons of British officials still remains the strictly observed rule of the nationalist movement in an area where arms are so readily obtainable and in fact are openly and usually owned by the villagers, is a tribute to sincerity with which the creed has been embraced.'[11]

In 1934, Gandhi, visibly moved by the widespread popularity of his creed in the Frontier, remarked that he would like to be buried in a Frontier village, and went on to ask, 'if the *Khudai Khidmatgars* are truly non-violent, they will contribute the largest share to the promotion of non-violent spirit and Hindu-Muslim unity. . . . Also through them we should see the end of Afghan menace which we dread so much.'[12]

Gandhi's first visit to the Frontier took place from 1-8 May 1938, during which he made a full assessment of the impact of his message of *ahimsa*. He found that while the Pathans had rallied round the leaders who taught them *ahimsa*, they did so as followers of Abdul Ghaffar Khan rather than as believers in the creed, which they had understood only superficially. He therefore decided to undertake a mission to establish direct communication with the followers and indoctrinate them face-to-face through teaching and participation in discussions, prayers, etc. He travelled from village to village and covered the entire province. While he was doing so, he was also recording his impressions of the progress of his mission. He wrote back to Miraben, 'Abdul Ghaffar Khan is sitting before me as I pen these lines. He thinks he has imbibed the lesson of non-violence. . . . I have come to see with my own eyes what his people are doing. I can say in advance and at once that these men know very little of non-violence. All the treasure they have is their faith in their leader. I do not cite these soldiers of peace as a finished product. . . . My purpose will be fulfilled if I succeed in reaching those men's hearts. . . .'[13]

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In Utmanzai, the home village of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Gandhi was upset to find armed *Khudai Khidmatgars* guarding him. He said, 'a *satyagrahi* must renounce the use of arms for self-protection . . . if India was ever to attain *swaraj* it must first be able to defend herself against the trans-border raids, without the help of the police and the military. here. . . a hundred thousand *Khudai Khidmatgars* . . . if they had really assimilated the non-violence of the brave, and not a mere expedient, or a lip profession, they ought to be able to befriend the trans-border raiders . . . and wean them from their raiding habit. . . . '[14]

The closer Gandhi went to the Pathans, the deeper became his awareness that the respect and love he received from them was a manifestation of the spiritual bond that had been established between them and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who was called by various honorific titles like Badshah Khan, Bacha Khan, Fakhr-e-Afghan etc,. However, the crowds assembling at Gandhi's meetings, the attention with which they listened to his sermons, the assurances that he received, and the discipline of the volunteers, were seen as encouraging signals throughout the length and breadth of India, where the devotees of Gandhi began to call Abdul Ghaffar Khan the *Frontier Gandhi*—a name adored and revered by the Congress rank and file.

In a frank discussion with Bacha Khan, Gandhi said,

> The conviction is growing upon me that unless we can develop the capacity to stop these frontier raids without the help of the police and the military, it is no use the Congress retaining power in the Frontier Province. For, in that case, our strength will continue to ebb away and we are bound to be defeated in the end. A wise general never waits till he is beaten. He withdraws in time from a position which he knows he would not be able to hold . . . it has been a pet dream of mine to visit the tribal areas, go right up to Kabul . . . and try to understand their psychology . . . establish a bond of friendship and sympathy . . . if *Khudai Khidmatgars* are what their name signifies I am sure that we can achieve that feat today. . . .[15]

As his tour progressed, Gandhi varied his tone from criticism to encouragement and vice versa, to suit the occasion. In one sermon he said,

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> . . . To Badshah Khan's credit stands the miracle of making thousands of Pathans renounce their arms . . . What has been achieved is nothing short of marvellous . . . even if someone subjects you to the most inhuman tortures, you will joyfully face the ordeal and make the supreme sacrifice with God's name on your lips and without a trace of fear or anger or.. revenge . . . it will be heroism of the highest type . . . he alone is truly brave . . . a martyr . . . who dies without . . . wishing to hurt his enemy, not the one who kills and dies. . . .[16]

At some places Gandhi was assured that the Pathans' faith in his creed was so strong that even if Badshah Khan turned away from the path of non-violence, they would not give up their belief in *ahimsa*. Apparently, Gandhi was winning the hearts of the Pathans who began to pledge direct allegiance to Gandhi. But Gandhi was not carried away by such emotional responses although the Congress leadership could cash on these commitments later, at an appropriate time. Gandhi subjected their professed commitment to test through searching questions. He said,

> It was comparatively easy to maintain a passive non-violence when the opponent was powerful. . . . But would you remain non-violent in your dealings among yourselves and also with your countrymen . . . ? Was your non-violence of the strong or that of the weak? If the latter was the case, it was better for you to resume your weapons. . . . A charge has often been levelled against me and Badshah Khan that we are rendering India and Islam a disservice by preaching the gospel of non-violence to the brave and warlike people . . . that I have come to sap your strength. The Frontier province, they say, is the bastion of Islam in India, the Pathans are past masters in the use of sword and the rifle, and mine is an attempt to emasculate them. . . . I wholly repudiate the charge. My faith is that by adopting . . . non-violence in its entirety, you will indeed be rendering a lasting service to India and to Islam, which just now, it seems to me, are in danger; . . . if (by renouncing arms) you feel weaker instead of stronger, it would be better for you to give up non-violence. . . . I have read the Quran with as much ease and reverence as I have read the Gita. I claim to have as much regard . . . for Islam, as for my own (faith), and I dare say, that, although the sword has been wielded in the history of Islam, and

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that too, in the name of religion, Islam was not founded by sword, nor was it spread due to it . . . if you can assimilate this . . . you will show the way to Europe. . . . You have so far only arrived at the portals of non-violence. Still you have been able to achieve so much. How much greater your achievement will be when you have fully entered the holy edifice. But that requires previous preparation and training. At present you lack both.[17]

Gandhi had taught non-violence to his followers throughout India but the toughest challenge he ever met was in the Frontier. His patience was put to the severest test by the most elementary, and yet the very basic questions that arose in the minds of his devotees, including Bacha Khan himself. Troubled by the pitfalls he was anticipating then, and for the rest of his life, Bacha Khan engaged Gandhi in a dialogue:

Khan : Some Pathans persecute *Khudai Khidmatgars* beyond endurance. What should we do?

Gandhi : Meet high-handedness with patience and forbearance. Do not answer violence by violence, abuse by abuse; nor harbour anger in your hearts. That will melt their hearts. If it fails, we shall non-co-operate. If they seize lands, refuse to provide labour, even though you may have to starve. Brave their wrath, but refuse to submit or go against your conscience.

Khan : Would it be permissible to lodge a complaint before the police and get them punished?

Gandhi : A true *Khudai Khidmatgar* will never go to a law court. Fighting in a law court is just like physical fighting. Only, you use force by proxy. Police punishment to aggressor is only a form of revenge, which *Khudai Khidmatgars* must abjure.[18]

Gandhi's interpretation of the philosophy of *ahimsa* must have left a bewildered Khan more confused. What, the Khan must have asked himself, are the *Khudai Khidmatgars* fighting for, after all? Were they not seeking India's independence? If so, was a free India to be ruled by the followers of the cult of *ahimsa* only? Was India going to be a democracy with a multi-party system, or an exclusive preserve of *ahimsa's* followers? Would the non-believers in *ahimsa* have a fair chance to rule India? if so, will they rule India without an army? If they were not to rule,

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was India's freedom a worthy cause for *ahimsa* believers? And, at home, were not the *Khudai Khidmatgars* ruling the Frontier Province? Could Abdul Ghaffar Khan visualise a Frontier government without the police and the army? Apparently, he did not; his skepticism is evident in the preceding dialogue, but Gandhi did, which indeed baffled the Khan, like it baffled other members of the Congress high command. But whereas other members of the high command had the courage of conviction to be able to oppose Gandhi in the Working Committee, the Khan did not, guided as he was, by his faith, which had overcome the power of his reasoning.

At Hoti, District Mardan, Gandhi told a crowd that Dr Khan Saheb , the Frontier Chief Minister, was helpless against the trans-border raids, because the government had no other way of dealing with them. Prescribing an alternative remedy, he said, 'I am sure you will succeed where your government had failed . . . the government had tried brute force, which had failed. . . . ' One *Khudai Khidmatgar,* unable to conquer the Pathan instinct of retaliation, told Gandhi that he could put up with every kind of provocation except the abuse of his revered leaders. Gandhi responded, 'non-violence can not be accepted or rejected in part. It had value only when practised in entirety. . . . I know, it is no joke for a Pathan to take an affront lying low. I have known Pathans . . . inflammable, the first to take part in riots, they hold life cheap and would kill a human being like a sheep or a hen. . . . If a hundred thousand *Khudai Khidmatgars* became truly non-violent . . . it will be . . . a miracle. . . . '[19]

In Swabi, Gandhi warned his followers that if they were unable to bear insults and indignities in jail, it would be better for them to give up their uniform. 'Mere filling of jails will not bring freedom to India. Even the thieves and criminals go to prison . . . A *satyagrahi* goes to jail not to embarrass the jail authorities but to convert them by . . . his innocence.'[20]

When the Pathans had accepted Buddhism, it was without reservations, because the new faith was a clear cut departure from their old faith. When they accepted Islam, they did so, once again, without reservations, because those who converted them did not mince words that Islam and previous faiths were in perfect harmony. But now, in the twentieth century, the

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Pathans were being taught to absorb and assimilate a new creed of *ahimsa*, with total commitment, on the basis that this creed was also taught by Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Somehow, the Pathans were not able to reconcile themselves to this marriage between Islam and *ahimsa* despite all the pleading and preaching. The incompatibilities troubled their minds. Gandhi's task was much more difficult than that of the preachers of Buddhism and Islam. Was Gandhi asking for too much? He realized the immensity of the task, as did the Khan. But they did not lose hope. For, to India, the Frontier was much more than a mere province, and the Pathans were more than a mere people. In a geo-strategic sense, winning this land and its people, was a top priority in the calculation of the Congress high command.

During the tour, Gandhi and Bacha Khan made a joint assessment of the success of the visit. The humble Khan confessed,

> We admit that we fall short of Mahatmaji's standard of non-violence. We have not been able to banish anger. . . . We often lose our temper. . . . We feel our shortcomings . . . we will sincerely strive to overcome. . . . There is violence in their (Pathans') hearts . . . given a chance they can be hammered into shape. . . . There is no other way of the salvation of the Pathans. . . . A non-violent Pathan is more dangerous than a violent Pathan.[21]

An action plan for total indoctrination was chalked out. A training centre was to be set up in Utmanzai where the placid arts of spinning and weaving and allied crafts were to be taught. A batch of volunteers was to be sent to Wardha to get lessons in the science of *Khadi*, first aid, hygiene, sanitation, village uplift, and a regulated life style.

Gandhi's visit was a source of education for Bacha Khan himself. It cleared his perspective. He proposed that Utmanzai Centre should be run along the lines of Sevagram where his personal experience with the Harijans provided him an ideal solution to India's communal problem. Among his followers, there were many self-seekers and the Khan sought Gandhi's advice on how to deal with them. Gandhi advised that the Khan should try to understand the psychology of the evil doers,

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who may be the victims of circumstances, and through patience and sympathy, he may be able to win over at least some of them. As a last resort, he should shun the evil doers. But non-co-operation with them must be non-violent, it must be rooted in love, and its object should not be to punish but to reform.[22]

Gandhi then touched the gut issue, which formed the heart and soul of *ahimsa*, namely, its universality and timelessness. He told the Khan that no faith, no creed, and no religion could last or survive unless tempered or polished in the true spirit of *ahimsa:*

> Times change and systems decay. But it is my faith that only (and only) *ahimsa* will endure. Nineteen centuries ago, Christianity was born. The ministry of Jesus lasted only for three brief years. His teaching was misunderstood even during his own time and today's Christianity is a denial of his central teaching, which is, 'love thy enemy.' But what are nineteen centuries for the spread of the central doctrine of a man's teachings?
>
> Six centuries rolled by and Islam appeared on the scene. Many Muslims will not even allow me to say that Islam, as the word implies, is unadulterated peace. My reading of the Quran has convinced me that the basis of Islam is not violence. But here again, thirteen centuries are but a speck in the cycle of time. I am convinced that both these great faiths will survive only to the extent to which their followers imbibe the central teaching of non-violence. But it is not a thing to be grasped through mere intellect; it must sink into our hearts.[23]

In other words, neither Christianity nor Islam stood any chance of survival except within the parameters laid down by *ahimsa*, which was timeless and all-pervading.

For Bacha Khan's close associates, including his brother Dr Khan Saheb, and his sons, whose intellectual horizons were widened by their formal education in western institutions, the cult of *ahimsa* was a matter of expediency. No evidence is available to claim that their convictions matched those of Bacha Khan. They could not comprehend how governments could survive through *ahimsa;* or that, in the cycle of time, Islam, to be able to survive, must use the benign umbrella of *ahimsa*, as preached by Gandhi. They had conceded that a subjugated people had no alternative but to resort to non-violence, as an

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effective form of protest, out of sheer necessity, and not by deliberate choice. Many converts came to believe in the efficacy of conquering personal ego when subjected to personal indignities inflicted through brute force. However, as a group, as a community, as a nation, and as a body of believers in the living faith of Islam, they found themselves ill at ease with Bacha Khan's march on a path preaching the gospel of suffering humiliation, indignities and insults, with a smile, in the hope that the enemy would be put to shame and repentance. The enemy could be brutal; the victim's non-violence may suit his political goals, his religions fanaticism, or his greed for economic, social or cultural domination. To offer only passive resistance, as a nation, to a cruel and high-handed barbarian, could be interpreted as condoning injustice, barbarism and adventurism.

Generally, a Pathan's pride rested on two pillars which made him feel distinct from the rest of India. Firstly, he was acutely conscious of his past glory, his love for freedom, his rejection of submission under brutal threat, and his inclination to meet force with force. While he agreed with *ahimsa* in so far as it rejected submission to brute force, he differed on the strategy. Secondly, Pathan's heritage is his precious possession, and he has his own perception of this heritage. Pandit Nehru attempted to change the Pathan's perception of his own history and Gandhi was questioning the very basis of a Pathan's understanding of Islam. Had Pandit Nehru and Gandhi who changed the destiny of India, properly understood the feelings of the Pathans, they could perhaps have avoided the pitfalls, which cost them dearly in the years to come. Nehru's approach to them was intellectual while that of Gandhi was spiritual. While the Pathans were quite amenable to the ideas of a reformer telling them that faith, which had been tarnished over the centuries, needed purification in doctrine and practice, they were unwilling to grant Gandhi such a role. Gandhi's sermon to them was considered an invasion by a creed which was alien to their beliefs. If and when a Pathan reacts, nothing stops him from taking an extreme position. Non-Pathans, notwithstanding their intellectual calibre and spiritual attainments, should accept this basic fact, keep their perspective clear and then approach a Pathan accordingly. But Gandhi, considered as he was, the undisputed

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prophet of the new faith, would not give up. He travelled to the remotest Pathan homelands. In Kohat, he told them,

> The Pathan has come to be regarded as a bogey man in India today. In Gujrat and Kathiawar children turn pale at the mention of a Pathan. At the Sabarmati Ashram we try to inculcate fearlessness among the children. But I am ashamed to confess that in spite of all our efforts, we have not succeeded in eradicating the fear of the Pathan.
>
> During a communal disturbance, girls dare not stir out of their homes if there is a report of even a casual Pathan being around. They are afraid they will be kidnapped. I tell the girls that even if they are kidnapped, they must not be frightened. They should appeal to the kidnappers' sense of honour to behave chivalrously towards one who should be a sister to them. If in spite of their entreaties, the Pathan persists in his evil intentions, since all must die one day, they can put an end to their life by biting their tongue but not submit. They answer, 'What you say is right; but it is all new to us; we have not the confidence that at the proper time we shall be able to do what you tell us.' If such is the case with Ashram girls, what must it be with others? When therefore, I hear that a body of *Khudai Khidmatgars* has arisen among the Pathans, who has completely renounced violence, I do not know whether to believe it or not.[24]

Having received, what they must have considered a well-deserved rebuke for their 'savage and barbarous' acts like violating the modesty of Indian girls, the Pathans of Kohat and Bannu were subjected to more admonitions. On 25 October Gandhi told them,

> The recent (tribal) raid has touched me deeply. . . . Hindus are more often their victims because they generally possess more money. I possess no magic. . . . Situation has gone worse since the induction of Congress Ministry (under Dr Khan Saheb). Unless Dr Khan Saheb can cope with the raids, it might be better for him to tender his resignation . . . the Muslim population in the affected places no longer gives help against the raiders. . . . Let me warn you (Hindus) that if you depend for your protection on . . . others (Muslims), you must be prepared sooner or later, to accept the domination of these defenders. . . . I would go and mix with the tribes and argue it out with them and I am certain that they would not be impervious to love and reason.

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On 31 October 1938, at a public meeting in Tank, Gandhi advised what to do when a defenceless sister or mother was threatened with molestation by an evil-minded ruffian,

> The odds are that in his intoxication he will not listen. You will then interpose yourself between him and his intended victim. Very probably you will be killed, but then you will have done your duty. Ten to one, killing you, unarmed and unresisting, will assuage the assailant's lust and he will leave his victim unmolested. But tyrants do not act as we want . . . he may tie you to a post and make you witness the rape of the victim. If you have the will, you will so exert yourself that you will break the bonds or break yourself in the attempt. There is also the chance that the intended victim may copy your calm courage and immolate herself rather than allow herself to be dishonoured.[25]

Traditionally, the Pathans' respect for women folk was well known, and it seemed odd to associate them with the crime of rape.

On 6 November 1938, Gandhi drove to Hazara and, enroute, his car knocked down a calf. The local Congressman put the blame for the accident on the opponents of the Congress ministry. Being an eye witness to the absurdity and baselessness of the allegation, Gandhi said, 'the calf was accidently run over by our car. Love, compassion and mercy should have prompted the chauffeur to stop the car immediately so that adequate arrangements might be made for the treatment and cure of the injured animal. One of our party showed what seemed to me unseemly haste in naming the so-called opponents as the deliberate authors of the incident. In non-violence we must not be in a hurry to ascribe motives to the opponent or regard him with suspicion, unless we have proof positive of it. Independence will not come to us till our love shines out in our littlest acts. We must send someone to the place of accident to offer compensation to the owner of the animal and to take the calf to a vet,' he told Bacha Khan.[26]

This incident, so eloquently described by no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi, the father of India, was an apt reflection on the future course of the history of the Frontier. The Congress ruled at Peshawar; the *Khudai Khidmatgars* held sway over the masses; they had raised more than three hundred thousand

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disciplined volunteers in uniform. And yet, even at the height of their glory, they suffered from a persecution complex concocting imaginary allegations against their political adversaries. Such deep-rooted malice reached its climax during Pandit Nehru's visit in later years. The only difference was that, while Gandhi, a cool tempered, God-fearing and saintly man, could stand up, pronounce the truth and condemn falsehood, others were not endowed with such saintly attributes.

To his utter dismay, Gandhi found the Frontier Congressmen devoid of mercy, love and compassion, and possessed by the demon of prejudice and intolerance. A simple road accident was blown up to achieve political mileage. The moral fibre of Gandhi's trusted and dependable disciples came to the surface, almost spontaneously, without even being put to the test. The incident must have confirmed his own doubts which he had expressed from time to time, about the efficacy of applying his doctrine to this province, and led him to conclude that, sooner or later, when the day of reckoning came, his followers would let him down badly and frustrate his mission. This was a manifestation of the impression which was gaining ground, and hinted at by Gandhi himself in earlier meetings in Kohat and Bannu, that the influence of the Congress had already begun to erode.

In 1938, there were not many opponents to the Congress in the Frontier but their number was enough to be of nuisance. If they wanted to disrupt Gandhi's rallies, they could have done so, but they did not. They could have made assassination attempts, successfully, without caring for the consequences, but they did not. Non-Congress Pathans were tolerant of their guests, irrespective of their political and religious differences. It was an insult to a Pathan to be accused of engineering an accident to knock down a calf.

As if to atone for the *Khudai Khidmatgars* 'unbecoming conduct', the Congressmen arranged a mass farewell meeting in Abbottabad. Gandhi was paid glowing tribute of being 'the greatest man on earth.' Rather than thanking the organizers for the tribute they paid him, Gandhi rebuked his Frontier flatterers with a sharp ridicule:

> My seventy years of experience has taught me that the truly great are often those whose greatness the world knows nothing

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about during their life time. God alone is judge of true greatness. In Kathiawar, we have a class of people known as *Bhatts* or professional bards (flatterers) who make their living by singing praises of their chiefs for money. Well, I will not call you *Bhatt* mercenaries. But it is wrong to indulge in hyperbolic praises of your leaders.[27]

This farewell meeting was at once a climax and an anti-climax. A climax because Gandhi would never again get a similar opportunity to preach his creed face-to-face to the hundreds of thousands of Pathans, who were to see him, hear him, and make an attempt to comprehend his message. The anti-climax is most aptly contained in his remarks, equating his Pathan devotees with the professional *Bhatt* mercenaries of Kathiawar, singing undeserved praises to extract money and eke out a living. Whether this plain speaking to his Pathan devotees, which a leader of Gandhi's calibre had to resort to correct their perspective, and bring them down to earth, had the desired effect, or proved to be an overdose, was to be seen in the subsequent years. But to put a balm on the Pathans' injured pride, Gandhi assured them, that, although, his creed was professed by millions of his followers in India, it was honestly and faithfully practised by only a few and that too, as a policy only, 'but I am encouraged by the beginning made by the *Khudai Khidmatgars.*'

Unable to find appropriate parting words to match Gandhi's eloquence, Bacha Khan narrated his experience with a Punjabi to reaffirm his faith in *ahimsa:*

A friend from Punjab denounced me for undermining Islam by preaching *ahimsa*. I cited chapter and verse from the Quran to show the emphasis that Islam has laid on peace, forbearance and self-restraint. My reply rendered him speechless. Mahatmaji, I hate politics. It is an empty and barren maze; I wish to run away from it and to occupy myself with humanitarian service of the poor.[28]

On 11 November 1938, Gandhi summed up his tour impressions, as published in the *Harijan*. This may be considered his final verdict on the *Khudai Khidmatgars*. Had this verdict been taken seriously, the idealists would have turned realists much sooner and the agony they had to undergo could have been

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avoided. Gandhi wrote

> . . . the *Khudai Khidmatgars'* faith in the creed in not yet independent of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. It is derived from him. It is living so long as they have unquestioning faith in him. A well known Pathan told me, 'I like you for what you are doing. You are very clever . . . cunning is the right word. You are making my people braver than they are. . . . Of course, it is good to be non-violent upto a point. Hitler has perfected the technique of attaining violent ends with the actual use of violence. But you have bettered even Hitler . . . if ever the occasion comes for the use of force, they (the *Khudai Khidmatgars)* will use it as never before, and certainly more effectively . . . I congratulate you.' I was silent . . . I smiled . . . I like the compliment . . . , but his deduction was deadly. If in the last analysis, the *Khudai Khidmatgars* became untrue to the creed, then the creed was certainly not in their hearts. The proof will soon come.[29]

Indeed the proof did not take long to come. When Hitler invaded the western democracies, Gandhi pressed the Congress to declare unconditional support for the Allies, in keeping with *ahimsa*, and also on the grounds of morality and truth which meant that the British should not be hit when they were in a serious crisis. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, true to his creed, stood behind morality and truth. But both the apostles of *ahimsa* were overruled. The Congress took the plea that slaves could not support the war effort. The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution which, by opposing the British war effort, in effect, opposed the democracies and supported the dictators. The resolution also achieved certain unstated objectives. It aggravated anti-British sentiment in India. It instigated the Indian soldiers, fighting on various fronts in Europe, Africa and the Far East to defect. It sanctified Babu Subhas Chandra Bose's disappearance from India and joining hands with Hitler and Tojo to invade India. The Congress calculated that Britain, unnerved by the Japanese advance in the Far East, would negotiate India's independence under duress. The resolution had begun to work on the Indian army. Large numbers of Indian army personnel defected on the Eastern front, formed the Indian National Army under the command of Bose and mounted an attack on India. All these developments on the battle field

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needed a political umbrella and back-up support on the home front. This was provided by the 'Quit-India' Resolution, passed by the Congress in Bombay on 7 August 1942. The Resolution, for obvious reasons, called for peaceful, non-violent protest. But predictably, and to coincide with the blood-letting on the battle field, the movement turned violent almost throughout India.

The Frontier's opportunity of redeeming its pledge made to Gandhi had finally arrived. The province was supposed to play its assigned role, which it did with all the resources it could muster. The enemy's final defeat and liquidation from the soil of India was in sight. The Durand Line would become open to manipulation, so the Pathan leadership thought. The Frontier Congress Committee gave full powers to Abdul Ghaffar Khan to conduct the movement, in keeping with long-term Congress goals, in his province. On 10 September 1947 Dr Khan Saheb wore a red shirt, entered the Civil Secretariat and made a speech. By the end of September, Pathan emotions had reached the highest pitch. On 4 October Pathans hoisted Congress flags on all government buildings. They attempted to break the police and military cordons guarding the offices and law courts, but were pushed back and arrested. The government exercised discretion and used no force against the angry mobs. Instead, the cooks in the *Khudai Khidmatgars'* camps mixed purgative in their morning tea, and *'mullahs* were hired to excite false religious sentiments, to dissipate and disperse the mobs.'[30] Thus, *ahimsa* and its efficacy, as a weapon of truth, honesty, morality, as well as its handling by its devotees in India, in general, and in the Frontier, in particular, was put to the litmus test during the Congress deliberations on the Quit-India Resolution and, thereafter, during the launching of the movement, which generated mass violence throughout India.

Gandhi's own faith in *ahimsa* came under severe strain when the Congress Working Committee decided in favour of partition of India, and referendum in the Frontier, on 3 June 1947. Bacha Khan complained that the Congress by-passed him while deciding these vital issues. Mr. Gandhi made a pledge to him by saying that 'If the *Khudai Khidmatgars* were oppressed by Pakistan, India would be honour bound to come to their aid, and he for one would not hesitate to advise

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Indian government to treat it as a causus belli. Gandhi later repeated that assertion to my son Ghani. When Ghani asked him as to what would happen to his *ahimsa* in that event, Gandhiji told him not to worry. "I am non-violent, the government is not".'[31]

This conversation between Gandhi and Abdul Ghani Khan (Bacha Khan's son) conveyed the desired signals to the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, as a guide line, for dealing with the newly established government of Pakistan. These guide lines were followed by them faithfully. Ghani Khan returned to the Frontier, called a meeting of the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, and announced their transformation into a brand new organization called the *Zalm-e-Pakhtun* a militant ethnic movement. Bacha Khan, who had also, by this time, turned his face from Delhi back to Kabul, reverting to his 1929 position of Pan-Pakhtunism, justified the re-emergence of this militant posture:

> The formation of *Zalm-e-Pakhtun* by my son Ghani is a direct reaction on the Pathans of the violent movement pursued by the Muslim League in the Frontier. During my three and a half months absence from my province, the people of the Frontier have been very much provoked by the violent and terrorist movement started by Muslim League. Consequently, those who hitherto have been believers in non-violence are now drifting to violence. On my return, I collected my workers and told them that I am not prepared to give up my creed of non-violence. But if any one of them believed in violence, he should openly disclose it. Many of them were of the firm opinion that there must be an organization for the defence of the non-violent people and they thought in the present circumstances such a body is extremely essential. The object of the party is to defend and not to offend. The *Zalm-e-Pakhtun* volunteers believe in violence. They wear deep red uniform and carry fire arms.[32]

The transformation in the Indian political scene had metamarphosed *ahimsa*, right from the author, down to the follower. *Ahimsa* was no longer timeless, all-embracing, universal and comprehensive. It became conditional, manipulatory, subservient, expedient, slavish, time-serving and impulsive. These conclusions could be deduced from the correspondence of highly placed British sources, quoted by Wali Khan, in some of his political studies, for his own purposes. Alan Campbell-Johnson, writes:

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> Unwittingly, Gandhi seems to have added to the general tension . . . during his prayer meeting this evening, he made a passing reference to the possibility of war with Pakistan, in an address, otherwise wholly devoted to his worship of God as truth and non-violence, but the phrase in question, 'if Pakistan persistently refuses to see its proved error and continues to minimise it, the Indian government would have to go to war against it,' has touched a raw nerve and undoubtedly aroused and almost scared (sic) speculation among the press, and will almost certainly find its way into the world's headlines tomorrow.[33]

This sounded like an ultimatum rather than a prayer for invoking God's mercy at the time of distress. Was this the general tone of Gandhi's prayer meetings, which won him innocent Pathan converts like Bacha Khan? Gandhi was universally known to have conquered anger, rancour and bitterness, and to have healed pain and suffering through peace and love. This war ultimatum did not upset Pakistan, but raised expectations of an immediate invasion by India among his devotees, including the Khan brothers left behind in Pakistan. But the non-fulfilment of Gandhi's ultimatum by India came as a disappointment to his devotees, and enraged the fanatics, who did not pardon his sin of omission.

Lord Mountbatten was naturally upset by Gandhi's speech and he demanded unconditional withdrawal of the war threat. According to Alan Campbell-Johnson,

> Gandhi showed himself to be unperturbed by the stir which his reference to war (with Pakistan) had produced. Speaking again, last night, he was at great pains to put the phrase in perspective, as he had promised Mountbatten, he would. Gandhian dialectic claimed that indication of when a cause for war could arise between the two states was designed not to promote war but to avoid it as far as possible. His final plea was simply, 'India knows, and the World should know, that every ounce of my energy has been and is being directed to the definite avoidance of fratricide culminating in war.' This is undoubtedly the truth, but so great is his influence that his words assume a prophetic and almost mesmeric power.[34]

Gandhi's devious style of covering up his war threat was reminiscent of the way in which Nehru had covered up his rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan in a press conference in 1946, the manner in which the Congress high command had

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manipulated the Cabinet Mission and destroyed the unity of India in 1946 and the style in which the *Khudai Khidmatgars* transformed themselves into *Zalm-e-Pakhtun* without any qualms of conscience. But for the deliberate ambiguities on critical occasions, shown by the top leaders of the Congress, which shook the confidence of the Muslims of India, the history of India would have been different.

As for Bacha Khan, his personal faith in *ahimsa*, as declared by him, remained unshaken, and Gandhi remained his friend, philosopher and guide to the very end of the Mahatma's life. At the time of crisis, when reason failed to produce the desired results, Gandhi resorted to fasting—sometimes a fast unto death—to exert moral pressure on the party concerned. He fasted several times, during riots, or when Muslims were massacred in Delhi after independence, or when India refused to give Pakistan its share in the partition assets like army stores and cash balances. Gandhi used fasting as a weapon to support the causes which he thought were right, to bring sense into those he thought were committing excesses. His fast, which he often equated with the Islamic fast, was not only used for self-purification, but also to purify others through moral pressure. Once convinced that he was right, he did not care whether the party to whom the fast was directed, was powerful, weak, sympathetic, callous, inhuman, barbarous, or a non-believer in the creed of *ahimsa*. This was his most potent weapon and it worked wonders.

As a true and faithful devotee of Gandhi, Bacha Khan was expected by his followers to use this potent weapon of *ahimsa* to influence decisions and the course of events. Many occasions arose which called for the use of this weapon. For example:

- —To protest to the Congress for by-passing him while agreeing to partition of India.
- —To protest to the Congress for by-passing him while agreeing to a referendum in the Frontier, and not treating the Frontier at par with Sindh and Punjab.
- —To persuade the Congress to introduce the third option in the referendum—that of independent Pakhtunistan—which the Viceroy had originally planned but later omitted under Nehru's pressure, because the latter wanted the Frontier to join India.

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— To persuade the Pathans not to be misled by the British and the *mullahs* (as alleged by him) and to either boycott the referendum or vote against Pakistan.
— To persuade the British officers and the *mullahs* not to rig the referendum (as alleged by him).
— To dissuade the Pathans from indulging in communal riots, loot, plunder and grabbing of Hindu and Sikh properties before, during and after partition (as alleged by him).
— To persuade the Pakistan government to give a special status to the NWFP, or to carve out an ethnic Pakhtun province (as demanded by him).
— To persuade India to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir (if he believed that the plebiscite was a just solution).
— To persuade the Pakistan government not to obstruct the social work of *Khudai Khidmatgars* (as alleged by him).
— To persuade the Pakistan government to release him from detention or jail, where he was confined without reasonable grounds or without trial, as alleged by him.
— To protest against maltreatment by the jail authorities.
— To persuade Pakistan not to harass the Pathans, as alleged by him.
— To persuade the Pakistan government to terminate the services of British officers, whose presence he objected to.
— To protest against the take-over of the government of Pakistan by non-locals, like Jinnah, Liaquat Ali, and others, as objected to by him a number of times.
— To protest against the military coup d'etats staged by the army Generals Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan and Ziaul Haq.
— To protest against the amalgamation of one unit in West Pakistan.
— To protest against India's refusal to pay Pakistan's share of assets which also contained twenty-five per cent share of the Pathans.

It could be argued that the Pakistani rulers would have rather seen him die fasting, than continue to pose a threat to them, and that is why he refused to play into their hands. But such an argument calls into question the moral content of his creed. Moreover, there were many occasions, when fasting could have been most effectively targetted at those who listened to him,

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respected him, loved him, and to whom he had offered the Frontier province on a silver platter, namely, the Congress leadership, the Indian authorities, and the Pathans.

Why Bacha Khan chose not to employ his most potent moral weapon against the injustices done to him, or to his cause, by the Congress, by the Muslim League, by the British, by the Pathan, by Pakistan, and by India, remains a mystery. He fasted only once to protest against the killing of Muslims in Ahmadabad, and his fasting produced positive results. Why he was unable to pursue that course he did not explain. He did not lack courage. He did not lack conviction. His faith was strong. Was it because he did not enjoy the position of Bapu in Pakistan? Bacha Khan was a leader of the opposition, and he could have become the 'Bapu' of the opposition. He could have set a tradition of silent protest and moral pressure, and laid the foundation of clean politics, based on ethics and morality in Pakistan, irrespective of what the government or the ruling party said or did against him.

When Gandhi came to India, he was not the 'Bapu' but mere Mr M K Gandhi. He rose to popularity through patience and faith. The British treated him roughly but he was unruffled. He was a Gujrati but he addressed all of India. He never spoke of the oppression and suppression of Gujratis alone. By contrast, after being rejected by the Congress, Bacha Khan projected himself as a Pathan, and not as a Pakistani. Thus he provided a platform to his Pathan rivals in the Frontier to run him down, by demolishing his ethnic tendencies. His adversaries would have been left out in the cold if he had ignored them and won the hearts of non-Pakhtuns in much the same manner as he did before independence. If he found the Muslim League to be corrupt, opportunist and a British agent, he should have presented a viable alternative, on a wider national plane and not on a narrow Pakhtun base. He formed Pakistan Peoples Party and then National Awami Party but, almost immediately began to preach Pakhtun nationalism. He encouraged his opponents to close his political options. All his political actions after independence were in contradition to the principle of *ahimsa*.

It is an irony, that the cult of *ahimsa* had to die prematurely in the subcontinent of India. It struggled for survival for a while in India till the death of Gandhi and then faded out. In Pakistan,

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it committed suicide more or less in the manner prescribed by Gandhi to a woman, under threat of molestation, when she finds herself trapped.

NOTES

1. Wolpert p. 56, quoting Saiyed, *Jinnah*, p. 184.
2. Ibid., p. 57, quoting Saiyed, *Jinnah*, pp. 199-200.
3. Ibid., quotes Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed. *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah's correspondence*, (3rd. rev. ed.), Karachi, East West Publishing Company, 1977, p. 82.
4. Ibid., p. 57, quotes *Gandhi — My Experiments*, p. 545.
5. Ibid., p. 57, quotes *ibid.*, pp. 551-54.
6. Tendulkar, D G, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan — Faith is a Battle*, p. 93.
7. Ibid., p. 94.
8. Ibid., p. 126.
9. Ibid., pp. 128-9.
10. Ibid., pp. 131-2.
11. Ibid., p. 153.
12. Ibid., p. 177.
13. Ibid., p. 243.
14. Ibid., p. 244.
15. Ibid., p. 245.
16. Ibid., p. 245.
17. Ibid., p. 248.
18. Ibid., p. 248.
19. Ibid., pp. 249-50.
20. Ibid., p. 253.
21. Ibid., p. 254.
22. Ibid., p. 257.
23. Ibid., p. 258.
24. Ibid., p. 261.
25. Ibid., p. 274.
26. Ibid., p. 278.
27. Ibid., p. 282.
28. Ibid., pp. 283-4.
29. Ibid., p. 288.
30. Ibid., p. 354.
31. Ibid., p. 425.
32. Ibid., p. 418.
33. Campbell-Johnson, Alan, *Mission with Mountbatten* diary of 26 September 1947, p. 206.
34. Ibid., diary of 28 September 1947, p. 208.
35. Tendulkar, D G op. cit., p. 464.

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4

Badshah Khan and Religion

Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Muslim critics questioned his Islamic credentials but he remained undaunted in what he believed and practised. Among his critics were the Muslims of the orthodox school. His political opponents attacked his liberalism. Ghaffar Khan believed that faith was a bond between the individual and his creator and that no one needed a certificate from any one to establish his reputation as a Muslim. His non-Muslim friends admired his convictions, his personal piety and his simplicity. Mahadev Desai once recorded that 'Abdul Ghaffar Khan is no less a Muslim than any orthodox Muslim. I don't think that he has ever missed a *namaz*. He has the spirit of brotherhood innate in himself more than many so-called orthodox Muslims.' [1]

Liberalism in faith was not uncommon among politicians then but Badshah Khan set a new precedent in the Indian context. When he was in Gujrat jail in 1930, he decided to devote his time to develop a closer understanding with the Hindus. At his request, the jail authorities arranged for the teaching of the Quran for the Hindus and Gita for the Muslims. These classes continued for some time, but had to be abandoned as there was only one pupil in each class. Badshah Khan notes that he and his Hindu friend incurred a lot of wrath; he was dubbed a Hindu and his Hindu friend was dubbed a Muslim. 'But I kept reading the Gita. I think at the back of our quarrels is the failure to recognize that all faiths contain enough inspiration for their adherents. The Holy Quran says that God sends messengers and warners for all nations and all peoples, and they are their respective prophets. All the them are *Ahle-Kitab*, men of the book, and the Hindus are no less *Ahle-Kitab* than Jews and Christians.'[2]

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On the issue as to whether Hindus are *Ahle-Kitab*, Gandhi pointed out to him that orthodox Muslim opinion did not share his view. Badshah Khan responded,

> I know, but they fail to see that Hindus and their books are not mentioned in the Holy Quran because the list there is not exhaustive but merely illustrative... I am absolutely certain that the meaning of the text includes all the people who have inspired books to govern their faith and conduct. And I would go even further and would say that the fundamental principles of all the religions are the same, although details differ, because each faith takes the colour and flavour of the soil from which it springs.... I can not contemplate a time when there will be only one religion for the whole world.[3]

India was in the grip of religious intolerance and it needed someone to rise above prejudice and set an example of tolerance. Gandhi had taken on this role, he had brought the Gita and the Quran on his prayer platform. Nevertheless, he was a Hindu and the gap still remained. A Muslim with equal devotion was needed to fill this gap. Badshah Khan with his call for liberalism and tolerance, moved in to play his role.

> In Dera Ghazi Khan jail, I asked for vegetarian diet in deference to the feelings of non-Muslim prisoners. Owing to failing health, the doctors advised me mixed diet but since there was no separate kitchen, I had to forego meat rather than have meat cooked in the general kitchen and injure my vegetarian brethren's susceptibilities, with the result that the jail superintendent was good enough to have my meat cooked in a separate kitchen. But some of the Sikh and Hindu friends could not tolerate my taking a meat diet.[4]

This attitude on the part of his Sikh and Hindu Congress colleagues hurt him deeply. He remarked, 'without a tender regard for the feelings of one another we are never going to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity.' Indeed, he seldom ever saw this 'tender regard' between religious groups and communities till the very end of the freedom struggle. In this lay the tragedy of India. Badshah Khan's views on fasting in the month of Ramadan—one of the five pillars of Islam—have been recorded as follows: 'It is a mockery of Islam to say that the fast as observed by the bulk of Muslims is the only true one. The

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Prophet observed complete fasts, days and nights. I think he permitted eating after sunset out of consideration of human weakness. The Prophet needed no food because, as he stated, Allah sent him spiritual food, which ordinary mortals could not get, as they had not the faith that is needed for it.'[5]

Although there is no priesthood in Islam and Muslims do not have to go to a *mullah* or a religious teacher to interpret Islam a class of religious leaders has developed which claims authority to interpret the meaning and spirit of the various injunctions of Islam. The great mass of Muslims, being either illiterate or not well-versed in the teachings of Islam, have traditionally respected the authority of this class of religious teachers. Even Badshah Khan visited the *ulema* of Deoband, a centre of great Islamic learning, although Deoband, as a school of interpretation is controversial, and many schools of *ulema* do not subscribe to its interpretation of Islamic teachings. More often than not, these religious leaders have differed, sometimes bitterly—even leading to bloodshed—on the interpretation of certain issues. Thus the enlightened and liberal Muslims have generally tended to ignore such controversial leaders of Islamic thought and exercised their own judgment.

Occasionally, such independent and individual interpretation, like the one propagated by Badshah Khan, has been condemned as apostasy and blasphemy, and the history of Islam is replete with such *fatwas*. In order, therefore, to eliminate confusion and prevent contradictory interpretation, the Muslims generally rely on the consensus of the learned religious leaders on controversial or divisive issues. In pre-British India, the Kings appointed Grand Muftis to interpret Islam. After the British conquest, the established institutions were dismantled, thereby creating a vacuum. Consequently, new cults and beliefs began to divide and disrupt the Muslim community. Some of these cults assumed international dimensions. The *ulema* or religious leaders had to move in to fill the vacuum by creating centres of learning at Deoband and elsewhere. Any new and unorthodox interpretation had to be looked upon with suspicion and subjected to rigorous scrutiny. This was a natural and inevitable response to the overwhelming alien and hostile influences of the Christian faith of the rulers and the Hindu faith of the majority community, which out-numbered Muslims three to

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one. Added to these fears were the large scale conversions by Christian missionaries, backed by European wealth, and the *Shudhi* campaign, financed by rich Hindus. Muslims and their faith were driven to a corner for two centuries. But the Pathans, living in their Frontier sanctuaries, may not have felt the socio-cultural and economic impact so acutely. It was therefore only natural that any new interpretation of Islam by Badshah Khan, motivated by political liberalism and the imperative of communal harmony, should merit special attention by the Muslim religious circles.

Rejecting the criticism levelled against his interpretation, Badshah Khan said,

> This newspaper criticism is like the one that tried to make me out to be a Hindu because I was observing silence every week or because I studied the Gita. All kinds of calumnies have been spread against me by some of the Punjab Urdu newspapers; there is a paper which loses no opportunity to make me out to be an enemy of Islam.[6]

Explaining Badshah Khan's intimate association with Gandhi, Mahadev Desai said,

> He has measured Gandhiji's life all through this (Islamic) yardstick and his clinging to Gandhi can be explained on no other ground. He has not been attracted by Gandhiji's name and fame; nor his political work, nor his spirit of rebellion and revolution. It is his pure and ascetic life and his insistence on his self purification that have had the greatest appeal for him, and his whole life, since 1919 onward, has been one sustained effort for self purification. I have the privilege of having a number of Muslim friends, true as steel and ready to sacrifice their all for Hindu-Muslim unity, but I do not yet know one who is greater than or even equal to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the transparent purity and the ascetic severity of his life, combined with extreme tenderness and living faith in God.[7]

Once, casually, Gandhi inquired about the English wife of Dr Khan Saheb and asked, if she was a convert to Islam. 'You will be surprised,' remarked Abdul Ghaffar Khan, 'that I can not say whether she is a Muslim or a Christian. She was never converted, that much I know. And she is completely at liberty to follow her own faith, whatever it may be. I have never so

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much as asked her about it. And why should I? Why should marriage alter one's faith? You will be amused to learn that my brother's son, who has just passed his London matriculation and proposes to go to Oxford, tells us in one of his letters that boys regard him as a Christian and he does not know what to tell them!' Mr Gandhi said, 'what you say about your brother's wife does surprise me agreeably. What would other Muslims say? Many do not think like you in this matter.' 'No, I know that many do not think so,' said Abdul Ghaffar Khan, 'but for that matter, not one in a hundred thousand knows the true spirit of Islam. That is at the back of most of our squabbles, and interested parties on both sides have simply fanned the flames of passion and prejudice. To what depths of degradation we have fallen!'[8]

If this conversation had been with Pandit Nehru, Gandhi would not have been surprised, since Nehru's own faith or lack of it, was well known. Gandhi's surprise was genuine. In secular Europe, the ruling families were tied to a particular faith in private and public lives. By contrast, here was a family, in the midst of a fiercely religious people, orthodox and fundamentalist in orientation, destined to lead the Pakhtuns politically, spiritually and socially, but not knowing the faith and belief of its members, and not even caring to know. If the Khan had any respect for the millions of Pathans, whom he professed to lead, he was expected to show respect for their religious sentiments as well, by being one of them, not only as a Pathan, but also, as a Muslim, accepting what most of them thought Islam to be. Alternatively, he could have refrained from joining politics, whatever the compulsions might have been, and concentrated on converting the majority of the Pathans, to the brand of Islam he and his family members believed in. Better still, if he had adopted the secular line, like Nehru and Maulana Azad, and refrained from Gandhian spiritualism based on a synthesis of Gita and Quran, he would have been on a surer footing as a politician, with all the following that he had in the Frontier and across the Khyber Pass. It seems that he had a vision that since millions of Hindus had put blind faith in Gandhi, millions of Muslims would put him on a similar pedestal too. And he had been led to this illusion by the blind faith of the Pathans, who 'listened to their

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Badshah Khan, got solace from his sight, began to regard him as a saint. . . . The wells at which he drank water were quickly emptied by besieging crowds who used the water for curing diseases. His sight was considered a medicine for many ills.'[9] He had acquired a messianic status.

Badshah Khan became more and more deeply involved with Gandhi in the synthesized prayer. In Wardha, he joined Gandhi in daily prayers and walks. He also joined Gandhi in *Tulsi Ramayan* readings every morning. 'The music of the *bhajan* fills my soul', he said to Pyarelal. 'Please put the words down in Urdu script and give me an Urdu translation of it.'[10] Gandhi's synthesized prayer is described by Bacha Khan himself. In 1945, he shared residence with Gandhi in the Birla House, Bombay. 'I would begin by reciting the Holy Quran. Then a Japanese would recite Buddha's teachings. That was followed by the *prathna* or Hindu prayer. Gandhiji believed that all religions conveyed the same message of divine truth. I share this conviction . . . my religion is truth, love and service.'[11] Commenting on the advent of Islam in India, he says,

> When the Arabs came to this land, they were intoxicated by the greed of territorial conquests and had degenerated into monarchy and dictatorship. They were devoid of the spiritual content, the divine light and the commitment to Islam, as taught by Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and elaborated by caliphs Umar and Abu Bakar. Consequently, our glorious past, our cultural heritage and our ancient civilization, were replaced by a corrupted brand of Islam. But for the subsequent effort by our own scholars and divines, who acquired the true spirit of Islam on their own, Islam would not have spread in India. Pakistan owes its existence to them.[12]

Badshah Khan's sons Ghani, Wali and Ali, who had received western education in Europe and USA and his daughter Mehr Taj, who had been educated in a convent in Murree, and then in England, were together in Gandhi's Ashram in Wardha. Taj entered Kanya Ashram where the Pathan girl had no difficulty in making the Ashram her own. Simplicity, peace, purity and freedom made the Ashram a second home for the (Khan) family.[13]

On 2 October 1936, Badshah Khan attended the opening ceremony of the shrine of Mother India, performed by Gandhi

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at Benares. The ceremony included the chanting of Vedic *mantras,* which reminded the Khan of a Vedic verse in the daily morning prayer for twenty years, 'Oh, Mother Earth, spouse of Vishnu, ocean-clad and mountain-breasted, I bow to thee. Forgive me the touch of my feet.' The prayer reminded the Khan that 'The mother who gave us birth was bound to die some day, but not so the "Universal Mother" who bears and sustains us. She must die one day, but when she passes away, she would take all her children along with her. She therefore demands life-long dedication.' At this function, Badshah Khan said 'in old days, mosques were built where people of all religions could go and say their prayers. . . . The temple, which the Mahatma had just opened, will fulfil the supreme purpose of a common place of worship and prayer.'[14]

Badshah Khan hoped that temples could be opened for Muslim prayers and mosques could be opened for Hindu prayers, so that, one day, the two religions could become interchangeable. Apparently, he was thinking on these lines on the basis of a precedent created by the holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) who once lodged a Christian delegation from Najran in Masijd-i-Nabvi and allowed them to hold their prayer rites inside the mosque. The position taken by the Khan was valid and well-intentioned. However, given the environment of religious intolerance in India, the issue was too sensitive to be aired publicly. He was aware that both Hindus and Muslims would dismiss his suggestion without a second thought, and that rather than make a positive impact, his appeal would be counter productive. In the Islamic state set up by the Prophet (PBUH) in Madina, he enjoyed supreme authority, both spiritual and temporal, which none could challenge; his words and deeds were examples to be emulated by his followers all the time, every where. In India, however, neither the Hindu rulers nor the Muslims rulers are known to have set such examples. The caste-ridden society did not permit even the low-caste Hindus to enter the temples of high caste Hindus. How could the 'melechhas' enter the temples? What the Khan was trying to preach had been attempted before him by Bhagat Kabir, Emperor Akbar, Dara Shikoh and Guru Nanak. They attempted to synthesize and restructure a homogeneous society in India but none of them achieved their objective. The followers of

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Guru Nanak created a brand new faith, which, rather than uniting the divergent streams of Hinduism and Islam, became a third stream distinct in its principles and antagonistic to both. With this background, the Khan's speech at best represented a passionate call of a troubled mind. It was heard with patience but misunderstood by all. It came in handy to Hindus to gain political mileage. As for the Muslims, they would not accept any verdict unless pronounced by an accredited and authoritative Indian Muslim source.

Khan's idealism was expressed possibly to uplift his own spirit, for he was aware that the reality of India was that no temples were open to Muslim worship. A political leader, who was an idealist and a dreamer, far removed from reality, was most unlikely to succeed in India, much less in the frontier. He condemned the *mullahs* for fouling up the political climate in India. Was he not aware that Jinnah, whose lifestyle was western, and whose personal beliefs were questioned by the *mullah*, was called a *Kafir* by a much larger number of *mullahs* than those who questioned Badshah Khan? Was he not aware that when Jinnah began to be called Quaid-e-Azam, a great Muslim scholar, and founder of a fundamentalist Muslim party, claiming widespread following, called him *Kafir-i-Azam?* Jinnah's Muslim faith was also questioned by a number of British Viceroys. Even as late as April 1947, when Jinnah's credentials as the sole spokesman of Indian Muslims were fully accepted, Mrs Indira Gandhi and Krishna Menon told Alan Campbell Johnson that Jinnah was not even a Muslim, that he was a Hindu by birth.[15] All the religious parties like Jamat-i-Islami, Jamiatul-Ulama-i-Hind, Jamiat-i-Ahrar, Khaksars, opposed Jinnah and the Muslim League. But Jinnah remained undaunted; he pursued his political programme through Muslim consensus, without any spiritual pretentions and without challenging the monopoly of the *ulema*. His motivation was purely political. He was thus fighting on the battlefield of his own choosing and with his own weapons. So the masses were not swayed by the *fatwas* of *Kafir* or *Hindu* proclaimed on Jinnah by some Muslim scholars or by Indira Gandhi. All the *fatwas* were drowned in the sea of mass support for Jinnah.

History has shown that *mullahs* have never swayed political decisions in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent including the

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Frontier; if they had, there would have been no Pakistan today. However, if would not be out of place to say that politics in India was shaped by religious impulses and that the political leaders, however secular in orientation, could not ignore that religion was the basic driving force. Both Hinduism and Islam are not religions in the western sense. Both represent a way of life, both pervade all spheres of human activity, including politics. Quite often, Gandhi refused to acknowledge that a body of converts could think in terms of a separate entity. But on 1 January 1940, Jinnah wrote to him, saying, '. . . today, you deny that religion can be a main factor in determining a nation, but you yourself, when asked, what your motive force in life was, the thing that leads us to do what we do, whether it was religious or social, or political, said: "purely religious"'.[16] Gandhi's ascetic lifestyle endowed him with the halo of a saint because his words appealed to Hindu religious sentiment. In 1920, he was appointed President of the Home Rule League in place of Mrs Besant, who resigned because it (the Home Rule League) had become intertwined with religion. This change marked a departure from the growing trend which eminent liberals in England and India had fostered, namely, to separate religion from politics. The introduction of religion into politics by Gandhi to secure power over the masses in order to arouse their political consciousness is intelligible but there was a price to pay, and it was paid in full by the partition of India. . . . Jinnah with nineteen other member left the Home Rule League.[17]

> When Gandhiji forced Jinnah and his followers out of the Home Rule League, and later, the Congress, we all felt, with Jinnah, a movement of an unconstitutional nature, sponsored by Gandhiji, with the tremendous influence he had acquired over the masses, would inevitably result in widespread violence, barring the progressive development of self-governing institutions based on a partnership between educated Hindus and Muslims. To generate coercive power in the masses would only provide mass conflict between the two communities, as in fact it did. With his keen sense of realities, Jinnah firmly set his face against any dialogue with Gandhiji on this point. . . . He, however, warned Gandhiji not to encourage fanaticism of Muslim religious leaders and their followers. Indeed, he was not the only person who foresaw danger in the

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Khilafat Movement. Srinivasa Shastri wrote to Sri P S Siwaswamy Aiyer 'I fear the Khilafat Movement is going to lead us to disaster.'[18]

Gandhi informed Mr Richard Casey, the Governor of Bengal that 'Jinnah had told him (Gandhi) that he (Gandhi) had ruined politics in India by dragging up a lot of unwholesome elements in Indian life and giving them political prominence, that it was a crime to mix up politics and religion the way he had done.'[19]

Keeping his spiritual commitment to Gandhi, Bacha Khan made his synthesised creed and faith the very foundation of his political programme in the Frontier, thereby exposing himself to counter-attacks by the Muslim religions elites. He had posed a challenge to the authority of the *ulema* and to their monopoly of religious interpretations. His new cult constituted a threat to their legitimacy established over centuries. The *ulema* had experienced enough encroachment on their territory by European missionaries, and the *Shudhi* Movement. These encroachments were backed by powerful forces. But a Muslim revisionist was relatively an easier target. The issue involved was too sensitive for them to ignore. They joined forces and used popular religious idiom to defeat Bacha Khan on a ground and with weapons unfamiliar to him. The Muslim League did not possess the expertise to achieve the miracle of ending Bacha Khan's spiritual domination over the Pathans. The *ulema* performed this feat painlessly and the Muslim League collected the political windfall in the referendum.

In a parallel development, the fanatic elements within the Congress succeeded in taming Gandhi's domination, exercised on the strength of his spiritual powers, in the Congress Working Committee, in the interim government of India, and in the newly established independent Government of India. So much so, that Sardar Patel, the Interior Minister, failed to provide security to Gandhi despite the threats of assassination received by him. Finally, and inevitably, the orthodox Hindus ended his life.

Thus while the ballot sealed the political future of Bacha Khan, the bullet did the same for Gandhi. Had Gandhi and Bacha Khan separated religion from politics, like their liberal contemporaries, and avoided using new cults and creeds to gain mass following, they could have averted counter-action by the orthodox schools of their respective faiths. But they knew

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what they were doing. With them it was a matter of faith, and without the under-pinning of their newly synthesised cult, it is doubtful if they would have achieved international fame.

NOTES

1. Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan — Faith is a Battle*, p. 175.
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3. Ibid., pp. 172-3.
4. Ibid., p. 174.
5. Ibid., p. 175.
6. Ibid., p. 175.
7. Ibid., p. 175.
8. Ibid., p. 172.
9. Ibid., p. 101.
10. Ibid., p. 193.
11. Khan, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *Aap Biti*, Lahore, Rohtas Books. p. 190.
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13. Tendulkar, op. cit., p. 195.
14. Ibid., p. 211.
15. Campbell-Johnson, Alan, *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 60.
16. Pirzada, Syed Sharifuddin, *Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Pakistan* p. 63.
17. Seervai, *Partition of India—Legend and Reality*, Bombay, Emmernem Publications (Pvt) Ltd., p. 12.
18. Munshi, K M, *Pilgrimage to Freedom*, p. 18.
19. Mansergh, Dr Nicholas, *Transfer of Power* Vol VI, p. 617 entry in Mr Casey's diary dated 6 December 1845.

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5

The Two-Nation Theory

The two-nation theory, as a concept, was alien to Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Pan-Pakhtunism was his goal when he began his political career. But he soon joined the mainstream of Indian politics, thanks to the calibre of the Congress political leadership and the existence of a common ruling power which had unified the administration of India. A vision of a united India, rising above ethnic and religious diversities, had been created, and efforts had been made to put up a joint front. What the leadership failed to achieve over the first four decades of the twentieth century, was the political merger of the two strong but parallel forces of Hinduism and Islam and to agree on some formula whereby the two could co-exist in united India.

Thus, it did not so much matter whether Abdul Ghaffar Khan opposed the two-nation theory on merits or otherwise; what really mattered was that he allowed his aspiration of Pakhtun nationalism, to which he declared his commitment in 1929, when the issue of ethnic nationalism had not yet been raised anywhere else in India, to be drowned in the sea of the Indian National Congress. This was a voluntary surrender, a conscious choice, made with the knowledge that by giving his allegiance to Indian nationalism, he *ipso-facto* renounced his Pakhtun nationalism. Commitment to Indian nationalism became total, irrevocable and unconditional. Various ethnic groups and nationalities had similarly renounced ethnic politics earlier. Thus at the time of independence, when all options for ethnic nationalism stood closed, no group could raise the issue of Pakhtun nationalism, or for that matter any other ethnic nationalism—Sindhi, Punjabi, Baloch, etc.,—just because the subcontinent, instead of one federation, became two non-ethnic federations. The parameters for joining one or the other federation were well-defined. A choice within these parameters was given to all territories comprising British India, including the Frontier province. Abdul

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Ghaffar Khan's allegiance to India, in preference to Pan-Pakhtunism, was to be inherited either by an independent India or by an independent Pakistan—whichever he chose. He chose none. Abdul Wali Khan now believes that he should have chosen India, and that, by not making that choice, Ghaffar Khan missed a rare opportunity.

Had India been partitioned on an ethnic basis, a Pakhtun nation, and indeed a large number of other ethnic nations, would have come into existence. But an ethnic division was neither demanded nor negotiated. Nor was India partitioned to separate Islam from Hinduism. Separation of the two religions was neither envisaged in the Lahore Resolution (1940) nor provided in the partition plan. Discrimination based on religion may have crystallized the Muslim League demands leading to the passing of the Lahore Resolution. But the genesis of communal politics in India needs to be probed deeply and analysed fully so as to show how the two major communities, which could have co-existed as one nation, drifted apart to a point where the Hindu majority in a united India, forced the partition of the country.

The progenitors of Hinduism descended upon India from the north. The Muslims followed the same trail. Hindus ruled India for several thousand years and reaped the fruits of their power. Then came the Muslims who wielded power for a thousand years. Then came the British. Out of the three, the Hindus and Muslims settled down as Indians while the British did not. The concept of nationalism was alien to the Indians. India became a single entity under powerful rulers like Asoka, Chandragupta, Akbar, and under the British. When the British came, they found India split into independent kingdoms, emirates, tribes, principalities, communities, etc. It took them a century to conquer it by nibbling at it bit by bit. The concept of Indian nationalism took birth and flowered under the British. They held it together as a single political entity through manipulation. Some call it 'Divide and Rule.' They may have divided the communities to rule India, but it is equally true that the British united India and the Indians divided India.

When Hinduism ruled India, its rule was absolute and total. The ruler was a Hindu, the functionaries were Hindu and the subjects were Hindu. Hinduism pervaded all aspects of the

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society—political, social, cultural, collective and individual. It banished all other faiths, through the process of total assimilation, elimination or suppression. Buddhism virtually disappeared from India. In the absence of any challenge to the social system established by Hinduism, there was perfect harmony between the ruler and the ruled. When the Muslims entered the scene, they left the local social system intact and concentrated on establishing their state apparatus only. The 'Muslim empire was Muslim in the sense that the man who wore the crown was a Muslim. Hindus and Muslims lived as subjects and citizens of the same state. Inspite of these centuries of being together, they remained separate. The two streams could not mix.'[1] Al-Beruni wrote about the Hindus in the eleventh century, 'they believe that there is no country in the world like theirs, no science like theirs, they call foreigners, *melechhes* and forbid having any connections . . . by intermarriage, or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, or drinking with them, because, thereby, they think, they would be polluted. This was true for many centuries till [the] later medieval period.'[2]

Bhagat Lakshman Singh was excommunicated in Rawalpindi, his home town, in the late nineteenth century, for eating a little wheat cake from the hand of a Muslim classmate. He wrote in his autobiography: 'the news spread in the town that I had turned [into] a Muhammadan. There was mourning by beating of breasts in the family and I was regarded an untouchable.'[3]

> The Hindu caste system was not the only factor in the lack of cultural integration. The Muslim elites suffered from a remarkable disinclination to imbibe even a modicum of the cultural heritage of pre-Muslim India. . . . The Muslims of Arabia and West Asia have cherished some of the heroes of pre-Muslim era. Their just King was Naushervan, their generous man was Hatim, the ideal philosophers were Plato and Aristotle. But for the Indian Muslim, elite history began with Prophet Muhammad and the Arab conquest of India and most, if not, all of the prior Hindu-Buddhist experience was irrelevant. Educated Muslims did not think of Yudhishtra as a model King, Arjuna as a model warrior or Kalidas as a model poet. A few Muslim noblemen, such as Malik Mohammed Jaisi and Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, wrote Hindi poetry, but it is doubtful if they found an appreciative audience in the Muslim elite

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> . . . Indian Muslims have accepted the great figures of ancient Persia and ancient Greece, but not the heroes of ancient India as their intellectual progenitors; the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* would not become part of their literary heritage as the *Shahnama* and *Sikandarnama* did.[4]

The author goes on to say that,

> Akbar [the Mughal Emperor] made a conscious effort to synthesize a common culture in India but the influence was short-lived owing to the reaction of the *Ulema* under the leadership of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, particularly during the reign of Jehangir. The course set by Akbar was reversed during the rule of Shahjahan. Akbar's liberalism was championed by Prince Dara Shikoh, the heir apparent whose main work *Majme-al-Baharya* (Mingling of the Two Oceans) traced the parallels between Islamic Sufism and Hindu Vedantism. He translated the *Upanishads* into Persian. But even if Dara Shikoh had won the War of Succession, he could not have enforced his religious ideas to the extent that Akbar had been able to do. There was to be no confluence of the two oceans, not even a real bridge over the divide. It would however be unfair to lay all the blame at Aurangzeb's door. The melancholy fact remains that even in the radiant days of Akbar, long before Aurangzeb set the clock back, Hinduism and Islam as religious and social systems they engendered, failed to develop links of intimate interaction; at best, they reached a state of tolerance and co-existence.[5]

Many historians have made efforts to probe into the factors that prevented all attempts, made over a thousand years, to find a meeting ground. They found that Hinduism, based on the caste system, had no room for co-existing with any other religion—whether it was Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity or Islam. These had to be Hinduised and absorbed, or else they had to be banished. That is what happened with Buddhism and Jainism. Islam and Christianity survived because they were professed by the rulers. Their survival was a standing challenge.

It needs no thesis to establish that the British did not create the Hindu-Muslim gulf. They inherited the problem, but they accentuated it by their policy of discrimination—favouring one community at the expense of the other.

> The roots lay in the estrangement following the Mutiny of 1857, in which the Hindus turned traitors, resulting in the whole wrath

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> of the British, falling upon the Muslims. After the Mutiny, [the] Hindus and Muslims never felt as one people. Then in 1867, Hindus agitated to replace Urdu with *Brij Bhasha*. The British suppressed [the] Muslims and encouraged [the] Hindus in formal education and jobs. Then there was the new Sivaji Cult, founded by a fanatic Hindu, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, which began the anti-Muslim campaign.[6]

Dr William Hunter in his book *Our Indian Muslims* narrates in Chapter Four how job opportunities were denied to the Muslims, how the change in the system of education and justice rendered the Muslims jobless, how Bengali Muslims were turned destitute, and how Muslim properties gradually passed into the hands of the Hindus.

Under a persistent Muslim demand, Bengal was partitioned in 1905, to create a Muslim majority province in East Bengal and Assam, where Muslims could enjoy better opportunities of education and employment. But the partition was revoked in 1911 because of pressure from the Congress. Bengali Muslims were thus permanently alienated from the Congress—and single nationhood. No wonder, the Muslim League was founded in Dhaka. Maulana Mohammad Ali, a great Indian nationalist, described the reunification of Bengal as a great blunder.[7]

In 1923, the Hindu Mahasabha adopted a new policy, declaring India as the holy land of Hindus. They claimed that the Hindus were a nation in their own right, and that the Muslims had no place in India; and that their goal was Hindu Raj. In 1925, the Mahasabha adopted a document called *Mere Vichar* by Lala Har Dayal saying that the, 'Future of India lay in (i) Hindu *Sanghathan*, (ii) Hindu Raj, (iii) *Shudhi* of Muslims, and (iv) Conquest and *Shudhi* of Afghanistan and the Frontier.' To militarize the Hindus, Pandit Malaviya organized training them in the art of killing Muslims. Bloody riots took place in the places he visited. When Gandhi came out of jail, he found the country engulfed in the politics of violence but he did not have the courage to face the crisis and allowed Malaviya to direct the political life of Hindu India from 1923 to 1927. Thereafter the workers of the Mahasabha and Congress freely interchanged, their party memberships and the workers of the Mahasabha could be members of the Congress and vice versa.

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In contrast to this, a Congress member could not be a Muslim Leaguer.[8]

In 1923, Bhai Permanand, a famous Hindu leader published the *Arya Samaj* and *Hindu Sanghathan*, in which he ruled out any prospects of Hindu-Muslim unity. To him the solution lay in the Hindus assimilating the entire Muslim population, or vice versa, but finding that to be an impossible task he proceeded to outline a new solution. 'It struck me a long time ago that the only satisfactory avenue of unity is to effect complete severence between the two peoples. It could be partitioned in such a manner as to secure the supermacy of Islam in one zone and that of Hinduism in the other.'[9]

In 1924, Lala Lajpat Rai wrote a series of articles, published in the *Hindustan Times*, the *Bombay Chronicle*, *Swarajya* and the *Tribune*, in which he suggested that the Punjab should be partitioned into two provinces, West Punjab with a large Muslim majority to be a Muslim-governed province and East Punjab with a large Hindu-Sikh majority to be a non-Muslim-governed province. 'I do not discuss Bengal.' To him it was unimaginable that the rich and highly progressive Hindus of Bengal would ever work out the pact agreed to by Mr Das, which offered weightage to Muslims; but he let the Bengalis determine their own future. He proposed four Muslim States, namely NWFP, West-Punjab, Sindh and East Bengal. He also advocated the formation of other Muslim provinces where compact Muslim communities existed. But he made it clear that these Muslim provinces would not be a part of a united India, but that there would be a Muslim India and a non-Muslim India.[10]

Viceroy Lord Linlithgow records an interview with Birla in 1936, saying, 'Had Mr Birla heard of a strong movement in the Punjab towards a federation of the North West, comprising the Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and the Punjab states, and in support, half a million rifles on the Frontier, and behind them the whole weight of the Muslim World? Such a scheme was by no means academic, and it might interest him to know that certain very influential persons in the Punjab had not only declared their preference for this plan but had openly advocated it before the Muslim Conference in Lucknow in private session. He (Mr Birla) said that the communal problem in India was growing rapidly worse, that Congress was well aware of this and its

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leaders were deeply apprehensive as to the future. Might it not take the sting out of the communal position if the Muslims were given their federation of the North West? For a moment, I thought that Mr Birla must be teasing me, but his countenance portrayed no such design and I am convinced that for the time being he meant what he said.'[11]

It is worth nothing, that in 1936, Birla, whose purse kept the Congress machinery running in top gear, could not be alone within the Congress in prescribing the partition of India, as a solution to the communal problem, in preference to constitutional safeguards for the Muslims in a united India, as demanded by the Muslim League. Upto this point of time, the two-nation theory, advocated by prominent Hindu politicians, intellectuals, as well as by the financiers of the Congress, had not been accepted or owned by the Muslim League. The critics of the League and Jinnah have not pinpointed the year in which either the League or Jinnah invented or accepted the two-nation theory. Well known Indian intellectuals and historions have claimed that the two-nation theory was, surprisingly, not the creation of the Muslims; that history cannot accuse either Jinnah or Sir Mohammed Iqbal for its authorship; that the theory was already widely advocated by prominent Hindu intellectuals and was an accepted dogma in the 1920s when Jinnah was a staunch Congress leader, and according to Sarojini Naidu, the recognized 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity.' These Indian intellectuals have attributed the partition of India to the duplicity of the majority community—the Hindus.[12]

Another Indian intellectual, R N Aggarval, in his well-known book, *The National Movement* has been quoted as saying, '. . . from 1917, V D Savarkar was fully preaching the gospel of Hindu *Rashtria*. He advised Hindus to capture power and establish the foundations of [a] true Hindu Raj. He said that India was inhabited not by a homogenous nation but by two nations—Hindus and Muslims. The Muslims were clearly told that there was no future for them in India, except as a minority.' Savarkar was not alone in this line of thinking. The same ideology found favour with many Hindu leaders even before Savarkar became widely recognized as the 'uncrowned king of the Hindus'.

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Dayanand Sarswati founded the *Arya Samaj*, a militant reformist Hindu movement. Shankar Achari Kurtuoti, a one-time President of the Hindu *Mahasabha*, proclaimed that 'India belongs to the Hindus; and the Muslims, who are only guests, should learn to behave like guests.' Hardayal, a former member of the Indian Civil Service, was equally frank: 'to attain *Swaraj*, we do not need Muslim assistance, nor is it our desire to establish a joint rule. A joint Hindu-Muslim state is sheer nonsense, which under no circumstances can exist.' He preached forcible conversion of Muslims to Hinduism, and the conquest of the Frontier tribes and Afghanistan.[13]

Major General Habibullah observed in August 1961, 'Communalism has been used to down minorities and to practise chauvinism in the worst ways. Always it is inferred that only a minority can be communal. In order to keep his nationalism intact, the Hindu most unfortunately identified the British and Muslims as one, thus complicating the view of history. Even Tilak refused to let Muslims join his freedom movement and declared Muslims as foreigners.'[14]

In his well-reasoned book, *The Concept of a Secular State in India*, Professor Vad Parkash Luthra of the University of Delhi claimed that

> India is not a secular state and can not be a secular state . . . the fact is that neither it is possible nor desirable to have a secular state under the present circumstances. Professor Ashok Pudra of the Department of Economic Planning in the University of Bombay (published in *Seminar* No. 67 March, 1965 p. 25) has been quoted, 'The underlying reason for the 700 years of history of hatred and intolerance lies in the failure of Brahminism to swallow up Islam in India. If Islam had accepted it, Brahminism would have gladly extended to it to the honour of being one more Hindu sect (low caste!). But Islam had deep roots in a different soil and it had become strong and resistant in a different light and far from permitting any of its leaders of the past to be regarded as Hindu idols, Islam considered it a part of its mission to destroy idolatory wherever else it existed. It is my thesis that Hindustan has been tolerant of only such ways of life and systems of thought and values which have consented to elect themselves to be Hinduised in their fundamentals.[15]

In his book *Indian Nationalism* Balraj Madhok says,

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> The religious minorities must adopt Hindu names. They must adopt a Hindu attitude towards their religion, which must cease to colour their loyalties towards the mainsprings of Indian nationalism. A talk of separate Muslim . . . culture must stop. India is one country and it has but one culture . . . the most urgent problem of Indian nationalism today is therefore to Indianize or Hinduize such people and to develop in them national consciousness which may transcend their group consciousness as members of different religious communities.[16]

Mr K L Gauba quotes the case of a 12-year old Durrani Pathan boy named Mohammed, resident of a village near Aligarh, who wished to learn Sanskrit, won a scholarship, wrote a book in Sanskrit, called *Ishavandans*, at the age of thirteen, which earned him the admiration of Hindu scholars. Nineteen years later, in 1964, Mohammed Durrani became Dr M K Durrani Shastri—the first Muslim to be awarded a doctorate in Sanskrit. Through open competition he was selected and appointed to teach Sanskrit in Delhi University. Within five months he was dismissed because the University came to know that he was a Pathan Muslim and that his selectors had mistaken Durrani for a Sindhi Hindu. Aggrieved, Durrani moved the High Court, which decided in his favour but regretted its inability to reinstate 'a distinguished Muslim scholar—a symbol of national integration' because the rules precluded the appointment of a Muslim. The Jana Sangh President A B Vajpayee called for the Prime Minister's intervention. The Prime Minister obliged the scholar by appointing him a despatch clerk.[17] Professor Javed Alam, a gold medalist intellectual, was dismissed from his post in a Delhi college when he married a Hindu girl.[18]

When Pakistan became a reality, the Hindu *Mahasabha*, the author of the two-nation theory, gave a call, 'Let all the Muslims go to Pakistan and build up a happy and a prosperous state there. We in India will build up a strong Hindu nation here, and let us hope that a time may come when our fraternal feelings would assert themselves and our misguided Muslims in Pakistan would realize the mistake they made in repudiating their ancient (Hindu) nationhood.'[19]

These communalist provocations were echoed by Nehru and Patel on the eve of partition. Said Nehru on 15 August 1947,

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'We think also of our brothers and sisters who have been cut off from us by the political boundaries and, who, unhappily, can not share at present in the freedom that has come. They are of us, and will remain of us, whatever may happen of us and we shall be sharers in thir good and ill fortunes alike.' If his message was addressed to all Pakistanis, then, Pakistan, to him meant their enslavement. But if it was addressed to non-Muslims only, it encouraged them to break their chains and migrate to a free India. On the same day, Patel said, 'But let not our brothers across the border feel that they are neglected and forgotten. Their welfare will claim our vigilance and we shall follow with abiding interest their future in full hope and confidence that sooner than later we shall be reunited in common allegiance to our Country.' To these overtures to Pakistani non-Muslims for reuniting the Indian nation, which to Mahasabha meant a Hindu nation, the latter added, 'We can not look at Hindus in Pakistan as foreigners, who are victims of the government and the people there. Thy are an integral part of the Hindu nation, whatever the political Pandits may say. India can not look with equanimity on their persecutions at the hands of an alien, ruthless and barbaric government. We do not know why we are striving to the belief that we are a secular state. The constitution of India nowhere mentions the term secular. In fact an amendment moved by Professor K T Shah to call India a secular state was defeated in the Constituent Assembly by an over-whelming majority. . . . Secularism or no secularism, nine million Hindus in Pakistan have to be saved and rehabilitated in India and five crore Muslims now in India are to be given safe passage to Pakaistan.'[20]

Gauba quotes several other influential Hindu sources supporting the two-nation theory in historical perspective, as well as, in the present setting, in India, since independence. He mentions Dr Ambedkar saying, 'Take the Hindu social system and examine it from the point of social utility and social justice. it is a religion which never intended to establish liberty, equality and fraternity. It is a gospel which proclaims worship of the superman—the Brahmin—by the rest of the Hindu society.'[21] He also quotes form *The Times of India* of 25 August 1961, saying,

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the Congress is the most caste-ridden of all the political parties in the Country, whose actions always revolve round personalities and castes. It selects its electoral candidates, ministers and even judges of High Courts on the basis of caste; shows preference in almost all appointments; and where he can, a Congress Minister tries to show favour to his own casteman. [The] Central leadership of Congress has not done much to cleanse the party of its castiest ulcers; on the contrary it recognizes caste groups, negotiates with them and appeals to them to maintain unity. The groups go back from Delhi to their respective states fully satisfied and resume their castiest intrigues with greater energy.[22]

Gauba also quotes C K Daphtary, Attorney General of India,

Even when the constitution was being forged, there were many existing elements of dismay, which, however, were either in an incipient stage, only seeds as it were of further growth, or which had been suppressed. Among these were casteism, communalism and lingualism. It was hoped and believed that there would grow, alongwith the pride of independence, a consciousness of India as a whole, an individual entity and of Indian nationhood, which would, if not immediately, at any rate in course of development, eradicate the *isms*. That unfortunately has not been the case. On the contrary, these evils have grown stronger and spread wider and have penetrated every corner of public life.[23]

Columnist K A Abbas wrote in *The Mainstream* of 25 April 1964 : 'The fear that haunts the ordinary poor Muslim is the spectre of unemployment . . . when he goes form place to place and finds it difficult—if not impossible—for a Muslim name to get a job. I personally know at least half a dozen young Muslims in Bombay who are working under assumed Hindu names . . . it is thus chronic fear which is driving a large number of Muslims to migrate to Pakistan in the vague hope of finding a better life there.'[24] Finally, and most shockingly, a member of Parliament was told by a colleague that Zakir Hussain, India's Vice President, was using a watch radio transmitter to pass on secret information to the enemy (Pakistan) during the war of 1965.[25]

To say that the Muslim League was driven to support the two-nation theory by the discrimination, intolerance, bitterness and vengeance inflicted upon Muslim by the Hindus, is a gross

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understatement. The League was unruffled even by the most provocative claims of the *Mahasabha*. As late as the end of the third decade of the twentieth century, the *Mahasabha* believed, that the task of constitution-making was the sole concern and the privilege of the Emperor of India. That was precisely the time, when the best Indian Muslim minds, including Jinnah, preached Indian nationalism, communal unity, and federalism, so that India could remain united. No Muslim leader preached secession or partition. All preached a federal India, and Jinnah was foremost among them, despite pressures exerted on him by some Muslim groups. He held on to his faith that in a free, secular India, the Muslims with constitutional guarantees, could play a positive and constructive role. But his faith was shaken, not by the fanatic Hindu parties, but by the Congress itself, and by Gandhi in particular, who dominated the Congress, and who was guided by his religious impulses, which nullified the secularism of the Congress.

Antony Copley made a comparative study of nationalism in his essay *Congress and The Risorgimento* in the following words,

> The (Congress) moderates represented the high castes, especially the Brahmins, and the educationally privileged . . . they had tried to keep religion and politics apart; theirs was an agnostic, secular style, which deepened their isolation from the Indian masses. The extremists, like Tilak, had brought them together, but in such a way as to encourage Hindu communalism. Gandhi also tried to bring them together, but in such a way that Hindu-Muslim differences would be transcended in a common nationalist movement. Did he succeed, or did he unwittingly contribute to the spread of communalism? Maybe, a more critical analysis has to be undertaken on the similarities between fascism and communalism, but it does raise a very awkward question, about Gandhi's leadership and its impact . . . it is not intended to suggest that Gandhi was in the least a fascist, it is simply to comment on the way a religious idiom is in danger of arousing a religious and communal response within India's religiously plural society . . . In India, the debate always really oscillated between forms of federation: the question was whether the centre or the regions should have the upper hand. This decision was postponed till the eve of independence. In 1946, there was still the possibility of a loose federation incorporating the Indian Muslims. In 1947, Congress opted for a more centralized state at the cost of Pakistan. Might other

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> arrangements have been better suited to the needs of two such politically pluralist communities, or was this (partition) the right decision?[26]

Other arrangements, including a loose federation, appropriate to a pluralist India, were rejected by the Congress, right from 1916 to 1946, but it agreed to partition!
This intricate issue has also been probed in depth by writer Anita Inder Singh, who says,

> After 1920, the appeals of Gandhi and Nehru were based on the recognition of the assumption of the separate entities of Hindus and Muslims. . . . Congress had sought to create an entity that had not existed before. . . . But this seemingly commonsensical approach lacked content and analysis, and apart from appeals for unity, did little to smooth out differences with Muslim politicians. It is worth noting that from 1885 to 1947, agreement between Muslim leaders and the Congress materialized only twice : in the Lucknow Pact of 1916 and for the *Khilafat*/Non-Co-operation Movement of 1920-4. When these agreements from the top broke down, Congress appeared bereft of alternatives to resolve communal discord either at the elite or at the popular level. The paucity of analysis of the strategy of 'unity from the top' meant that the Congress glossed over the fact that much of the Muslim opposition to it was based on political conservatism and social snobbery.[27]

Thus, when all chances for a settlement were missed and when India had already reached a breaking point, Gandhi proposed to Lord Mountbatten to hand over full powers to Jinnah—as if to satisfy the latter's personal ego—as a concession to Muslims. The worthless and the ridiculous nature of this supposedly generous offer was obvious to all parties, including the Viceroy and Gandhi himself.

Among Gandhi's most trusted Muslim nationalist leaders were Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, both members of the Congress high command. While the former saw no communal streak in Gandhi's deeper consciousness, and had unflinching faith in his pious even-handedness, Azad possessed a piercing insight and felt shaken by certain actions of Gandhi, which in his respectful judgement, were entirely communally motivated. He has given examples:

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I have to submit with regret that both in Bihar and Bombay the Congress did not come out fully successful in its tests of nationalism. . . . In Bombay, Mr Nariman was the acknowledged leader of the local Congress . . . This would mean that a Parsi would be the Chief Minister while the majority members were Hindus . . . Patel would not reconcile himself to such a position . . . B G Kher was brought . . . Nehru sought to placate Patel. . . . The matter went up to Gandhiji . . . Nariman lost. . . . We all knew that truth had been sacrificed to satisfy Patel's communal demands. Nariman's public life came to an end.

A similar development had taken place in Bihar. Dr Syed Mahmood was the top leader . . . also the General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee. When Congress secured absolute majority it was taken for granted that Dr Syed Mahmood would become the Chief Minister. Instead, Sri Krishna Sinha and Anugraha Sinha, who were members of the Central Assembly, were called back to Bihar and groomed for Chief Ministership.

Looking back, I can not help feeling that the Congress did not live up to its professed ideals. One has to admit with regret that the nationalism of Congress had not then reached a stage when it could ignore communal considerations and select leaders on the basis of merit without regard to majority or minority.

In Bengal, Muslims were the majority community but for various reasons they were educationally and politically backward. They had hardly any place in public life or government service. Mr Das realized that till the Muslims were given the necessary assurances for their economic future, they could not be expected to join the Congress wholeheartedly. He therefore, made a declaration which took not only Bengal but India by surprise. He announced that when Congress secured power, it would reserve 60 per cent of all new appointments for Muslims till such time they achieved proper representation according to population. In Calcutta Corporation, he offered to reserve 80 per cent of the new appointments on similar terms. He pointed out that so long as Muslims were not properly represented in public life and in the service, there could be no true democracy in Bengal. Once the inequities were rectified, Muslims would be able to compete on equal terms with other communities and there would be no need for any special reservation. This bold announcement shook the Bengal Congress to its very foundations. Many Congress leaders violently opposed it and started a campaign against Das. He was accused of opportunism and even partisanship with Muslims. But he stood solid as a rock. . . . I am convinced that if he had not died a pre-mature death, he could have created a new atmosphere in the country. Regrettably, after

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he died, his followers assailed his position and his offer was repudiated. The result was that Muslims of Bengal moved away from the Congress and the first seed of partition was sown.[28]

Maulana Azad saw the communal virus spreading within the Congress high command even though Abdul Ghaffar Khan may not have noticed it. When he became Congress president in 1939, he asked Dr Rajendra Prasad to reconstitute the Working Committee. Prasad nominated nine members, among whom he included Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who was sure to toe the Gandhian line but deliberately omitted the more prominent and devoted nationalist Muslims, as well as some liberal Hindus. Whereupon, Azad, overruling Prasad's nominations, included liberals like Nehru and Rajagopal Achari and prominent Muslims, like Dr Syed Mahmood and Asaf Ali.[29]

The manner in which Dr Rajendra Prasad was groomed to replace the nationalist Muslims of very high calibre in Bihar, is revealed by Azad:

> Prasad was too involved in legal practice and, in any case, he stood no chance to stand up to Congress leaders, like the Imam brothers or Mazharul Haq. When Gandhiji visited Bihar, he found the political scene dominated by Muslims. . . . Dr Sachchidananda Sinha arranged a dinner of prominent Hindus to meet Gandhiji. They told the latter that Hindus of Bihar would join non-co-operation movement provided Gandhiji elected a Hindu as the leader. Gandhiji said that he could not grant leadership to anybody at his own sweet will, but he promised that if a Hindu of a calibre and character came forward, he would offer him necessary support. Babu Rajendra Prasad's name was then suggested, and in a course of a few years, he became an all India figure with Gandhiji's help and support.[30]

Equally communal was the basis of Patel's elevation by Gandhi to an all-India stature. He was an ordinary lawyer of Gujarat with no interest in politics. When Gandhi settled in Ahmedabad, 'he picked up Patel and built him up, step by step. Patel became his whole-hearted supporter, and I have already mentioned how, on many occasions, he merely echoed Gandhiji's wishes. It was Gandhiji, who made him a member of the Working Committee. It was because of Gandhiji that he became Congress President in 1931. It hurt Gandhiji deeply that Patel should . . . (later) be following a policy which was

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quite contrary to everything for which Gandhiji stood.'
After independence, in January, 1948 during the massacre of Muslims in Delhi, Gandhi was annoyed with Patel, who, being Home Minister, could not stop the killings

> Patel spoke harsh words to Gandhiji and refused to cancel his programme to visit Bombay when Muslims were being killed in Delhi. Gandhiji began his fast in protest. Patel shouted : 'What is the use of my staying? Gandhiji is not prepared to listen. He seems determined to blacken the name of Hindus before the whole world'. Patel was Gandhiji's creation and would have been nobody without Gandhiji's support. When Patel returned from Bombay, he was not pleased with Gandhiji and did not approve of what Gandhiji had done to restore a sense of security among Muslims. Patel was not alone in this attitude. A group of Congress Hindus had grown bitter against Gandhiji ever since he started negotiations with Jinnah after his release from Poona. Their resentment increased day by day. They openly condemned him for giving away what they called the legitimate interests of Hindus. This was no secret and was widely known throughout the country. Patel's Hindu personality surfaced when his indifference to Mr Gandhi's murder, at the hands of a fanatic Hindu, was noticed keenly by Jaya Prakash Narayan, who demanded his explanation for his failure to take even the most elementary precautionary measures, even after an earlier incident of a bomb being thrown at Mr Gandhi during his prayer meeting.[31]

The two-nation theory has been examined in its historical perspective. On the Indian political chess-board, the existence of ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversities was a reality, and not imposed by the British. That religion was the most potent divisive force, was also a reality. These diversities and divisions gave an alien power the opportunity to manipulate and strengthen its hold on India. There is no doubt that these factors presented formidable obstacles in the way of synthesizing India into a single nation. Here was a challenge for the political parties and their leadership. The manner in which they took up this challenge is now no longer a secret. Some have seen reality in a clear perspective. Others have seen it through coloured glasses. Hence the difference in perceptions.

The authorship of theory has been assigned to whom it belongs. It's adoption, under compulsion, or willingly, is a matter of controversy. Congress rejected the theory but its gradual

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though unmistakable drift from secularism to communalism, as attested by the most authentic sources and reputed Indian nationalist leaders, compelled the rank and file of Indian Muslims to adopt a stubborn negotiating posture. Some of these examples of Congress duplicity are given in this book under appropriate chapters. These are summarized as follows:

a) the annulment of the partition of Bengal under Congress pressure;
b) Congress duplicity on the separation of Sindh from Bombay;
c) Congress opposition to the plea of upgrading the status of Bengali Muslims through better education and employment opportunities;
d) Congress refusal to form coalition governments with the Muslim League after the 1937 elections. Had Congress agreed this could have laid a basis for mutual accommodation, and a common front;
e) the two-way, open-door arrangement between the Congress and the Hindu Mahasahba, but not with the Muslim League;
f) the downgrading and by-passing of top ranking Muslim and Parsi Congressmen, and replacing them with Hindus, in commanding positions;
g) replacement of the Urdu script with the Devnagri script and
h) communalism discreetly practised by the high priests of the Congress.

It was upto the Congress to prove its nationalist credentials, and allay Muslim fears and suspicions about its communal character, and not for the Muslims to take the Congress at its face value. The two faces of the Congress, interchangeable as well as unpredictable, failed to inspire confidence among the Muslims. They were driven to the wall, and left with no alternative but to take refuge behind the much trumpeted two-nation theory, invented and propagated by fanatic Hindus, and to organize themselves on a Muslim platform. Even so, when the demand for a Muslim homeland was presented to Jinnah in 1938, in Karachi, he did not appear enthusiastic—in fact he had been advising the Muslim youth of the Punjab, in particular Chaudhry Rahmat Ali, to restrain themselves. He counselled

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a dispassionate analysis of the homeland concept by a special committee. Thus, even as late as 1939, Jinnah, by deferring the Muslim homeland concept, gave yet another chance to the Congress to accommodate Muslim demands within one India. At the same time, he asked the League leaders to weigh the pros and cons, before adopting an extremist position. The Congress responded negatively by challenging the representative character of the Muslim League, and ignored the agitated state of Muslim minds. It was, therefore, only natural, that on 23 March 1940, the Muslim League passed the Lahore Resolution.

The Lahore Resolution provided the much needed impetus, the direction, the rallying point, and a slogan. It became an important landmark. The two-nation theory proved to be handy. The League's popularity was no longer confined to Muslim minority provinces, because the demand had changed from safeguards for the Muslims to Muslim homelands. The mass contact efforts were now concentrated in areas that were to become the Muslim homelands. To the Muslim masses, ignorant of the original authors of the two-nation theory, it was now the product of that theory—Pakistan—which mattered. Within a short span of five years, the Muslim masses of the Punjab and Sindh began to support the League but the feudals still wavered. By 1946, even the feudal lords of Sindh and Punjab joined the League to save their status. Bengal was a League stronghold since the Congress had bashed the Muslims there. The Frontier had been insulated by Abdul Ghaffar Khan for a long time, but even there, the idea of Pakistan had begun to filter down to the Pathan youth, who could not sway the election results.

Some influential politicians in Pakistan still genuinely believe that the Muslim League created the two-nation theory. They would do justice to history if they begin to reconsider their view. The Indian Muslims had been caught in a political whirlpool, and were in a state of total confusion because this theory was inflicted upon them. They became involved in it not as its authors, but as its victims. The casualty of this theory was not the Muslim League alone, but the entire Muslim population of India. And yet the Muslim League was the only party that came out with a viable alternative to the political turmoil which was, that unless the Muslims took a firm stand

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in their negotiations their future would be bleak. This position took the shape of the Lahore Resolution of 1940. The fate of non-League Muslims was pathetic, because they lacked flexibility, and clung to their 'principled' position, in which there was no room for alternatives. Had they toed the League line, India would be united today, with Muslims getting all or most of the constitutional safeguards they demanded. The nationalist Muslims were swept away by the tide of the Congress. They condemned the Congress post-facto, but it was too late. But by far, the worst casualty of the theory, regrettably, was Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He did not accept the two-nation theory when it was flung at the Muslims—that was fair enough. But he refused to go along with the Muslim mainstream in India, in the belief that the mainstream current was propelled by the British. He did not do what other nationalist Muslims did, and what his political heirs think he should have done, namely, opt for India. Worst still, he did not accept the *fait accompli*. It is not easy to understand his choice, or lack of it. Was this naivety injured pride or over-confidence? Or did he misjudge the flow of political currents and cross-currents? Or was it a matter of faith, pure and simple?

The Muslim League has been condemned by some politicians for using religion to achieve political goals. Religion, as a political weapon, was opposed openly, but used under cover, by the Congress leaders in India before independence, and by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, in Pakistan. Among the most vocal critics of this weapon is Abdul Wali Khan, who criticises the use of religion as the basis of nationhood in Pakistan, and equates Pakistan with Israel—a state built by the victors of the Second World War, on the soil of Palestinian Arabs, to resettle the Jews displaced by Hitler. He strongly advocates the founding of secular states like Britain, USA, USSR, France, Germany, etc. on the basis of ethnic, linguistic and cultural factors. [32] He quotes Iqbal's verse—*Hindustan hamara*—to assert that India should have been one nation.[33] He quotes Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to prove that the term 'Indian' is synonymous with 'Hindu,' and that an Indian was a Hindu regardless of his faith.[34] *Arya Samaj* and Hindu Mahasabha made similar claims, as mentioned in this chapter. But the latter equated Indian and Hindu in their cultural and geographical sense and not in a religious sense.

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Historically, the term Hindu has been applied to a believer in Hinduism and not to an Indian. But this hair-splitting failed to integrate Hindus and Muslims through the centuries. They could integrate only on a political basis, as a nation, as was accepted by the Muslim League in 1946. This goes to prove that, to the Muslim League, the two-nation theory was neither a dogma, nor a matter of faith, but a tool to gain negotiating strength. Having acquired that strength, the Muslim League was in a position to deal with its adversaries more effectively, using the element of surprise, as a weapon. Thus, when Jinnah accepted the Cabinet Mission plan, it took his adversaries by surprise. Wali Khan is aware that the theory of 'Indian' and 'Hindu' being synonymous was preached to the Pathans under the guise of *ahimsa*. However, the moment the Pathans discovered the truth, they rejected *ahimsa*.

The argument against religion being the driving force of a nation is too simplistic. In the Western nations quoted by Wali Khan, Christianity faces no challenge. When it did, it had to banish Islam from Spain and the Balkan states, to secure Christianity from the intruders. In Bulgaria, Muslim names were not tolerated. Religion motivated major nationalist movements sponsored by the 'secular' west—in Israel, Lebanon, Cyprus, the Balkan states, Northern Ireland, the Baltic Republics, Armenia and elsewhere. In many European nations, state religion is specified. In Britain the monarch must belong to a particular sect of Christianity, and heresy against the state religion is a punishable offence. Christian Democrats rule many European nations, though secularism is practised in day to day life. By contrast, in secular India, religious discrimination is practised with impunity.

States based on ethnic, linguistic and cultural affinity can become an even greater menace. Hitler wanted the supremacy of ethnic Germans and he held the world to ransom. South Africa and Israel have been condemned by the world community for their racist policies. Had Pakhtunistan been established, it could have overrun Sindh and Balochistan to seek access to the sea, the non-violence of Abdul Ghaffar Khan notwithstanding. When one unit was established in West Pakistan, Abdul Ghaffar Khan called it 'Greater Punjab', and campaigned against it till it was dismantled. India may

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split into a hundred countries and Pakistan into four, if the ethnic formula of Wali Khan is followed to its logical conclusion.

Britain unified India in much the same way as the Romans, Napoleon Bonaparte and Hitler wanted to unify Europe. Had Hitler succeeded in holding his possessions for a while, they, according to Wali Khan's prescriptions, ought to have been clubbed together as one nation. After all, in both the settings, the colonies had quite a few similarities and not too many dissimilarities. Anyone, or a group of these colonies, trying to break loose, ought to have been branded as traitor, or at least a stooge, like Jinnah or the Muslim League was.

The examples of USA and USSR are equally irrelevant. The United States was established by the immigrants on the soil of the Red Indians. It achieved greatness after a War of Independence, a bloody civil war, a war with Mexico, territorial purchases from France and Russia and after overcoming racial and ethnic discrimination and practising equality. By contrast, India has yet to overcome its Hindu chauvinism and its territorial expansionism menacing its neighbours to its north, east, south and west. Similarly, USSR's example is not worth emulating. The union of its Republics, acquired by the Czars through conquest was obtained under coercion and was being perpetuated through coercion. When coercion was softened the union collapsed like a house of cards.

Whether Pakistan was based on questionable foundations of the two-nation theory, or on the crutches of religion, it is now a reality. Wali Khan is a voluntary signatory to its constitution. Presently, his party rules the Frontier and the federation in coalition with the Muslim League. If he believes that Pakistan is a theocratic state ruled by the *mullahs*, he may like to use his political leverage with the senior coalition partner to secularize the constitution and other state apparatus.

If the foundation of Pakistan rests on Islam, there is no need to be apologetic, just because Badshah Khan or his political heirs opposed it. Secularism is easier professed than practised. Many scholars have had a second look at the secular foundations of India. A noted international political analyst, Professor Imanuel Geiss, Professor of Modern History at the Bremen University in Germany, recently observed:

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With an imperial tradition of her own, India was stung by the independence of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Burma. However, Indian nationalism sought consolation by imposing its 'Pan-Indica' on the outlying states in the Himalayas—Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim—with varying degrees of influence. The three post-colonial wars with Pakistan were post imperial wars over strategic places such as Kashmir. India succeeded in weakening, rivalling Pakistan by skillfully exploiting divergencies between East and West Pakistan, resulting in the secession of Bangladesh in 1971. . . . India was beset with acute social tension, as ever before, by caste system of institutionalised discrimination—a system, originally the oldest instance of applied apartheid. . . .[35]

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6

Communal Riots

Badshah Khan was deeply disturbed by the communal riots breaking out repeatedly all over India. He foresaw the painful consequences and tried to analyse the underlying causes. He invariably came to the conclusion that the British colonial rule was the root cause of communal hatred, communal intolerance and communal frenzy, leading to riots and bloodshed. He believed that the solution lay in both the communities joining hands unconditionally, to expell the British. After entering active politics, he came face to face with many situations charged with communal emotions, which he tried to tackle by recommending *ahimsa*. On 4 April 1931, he advised Muslims not to object to the playing of music by Hindus in front of the mosque, but the reaction to the contrary among the Muslims compelled him to retreat. The next day, he clarified his position at a mass meeting in Bombay. According to Ghaffar Khan, his reference to the playing of music before mosques had been interpreted to mean that he had no objection to it, whereas, what he wanted to convey was that Muslims and Hindus should not fight over such insignificant matters while both were in bondage. 'When freedom was won, there would be no occasion for such communal bickerings. It was the presence of the third party in the country that always fostered a spirit of animosity between the two communities.'[1]

The Muslim leaders of the Congress had the unpleasant task of pacifying Muslim public opinion and moulding it in favour of the Congress. While their objective was honourable it was their diagnosis of the communal problem with which most Muslims disagreed. Dwelling on the same theme, the Khan said in Patna on 29 August 1934:

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Some people said that without Hindu-Muslim unity nothing would be achieved. But I want to tell them that there can be no Hindu-Muslim unity as long as there is foreign rule. The English could not stay in India if there was Hindu-Muslim unity. I was surprised to hear the Indians say that their culture was such and such and their religion was so and so. I would say that a slave had no religion. The political power was with the English. Where was their religion? Slavery was a curse and still the Indians believed that they were the most blessed. Hindus believed that their culture was the oldest. The Muslims were proud of the conquests of Ghauri and Ghaznavi. But they are nothing at present. Congress was neither Hindu nor Muslim. It comprised all. . . .[2]

In October 1938, Gandhi visited Hazara, where he was taken aback when told by the *Khudai Khidmatgars* that even in the Frontier, the Hindus and Sikhs considered any contacts with the Muslims a form of pollution. In other words, ninety-seven per cent Muslim Pathans were filthy untouchables in the eyes of the three per cent Hindus and Sikhs. Gandhi pacified the Pathans by assuring them that this was a traversity of religion, assuming that the simple Pathans were ignorant of the Hindu religion which sanctified untouchability. Thus, when the Muslim League was founded in the Frontier province it had good reason to begin it activities in Hazara. But Badshah Khan gave the impression that the League in the Frontier was founded under British patronage which promoted the fanatic *mullahs*. Here was Gandhi calling Hindu fanaticism a traversity of Hinduism and here was Badshah Khan dubbing legitimate Muslim political activity a traversity of Islam.[3]

The communal riots which followed the call of Direct Action by the Muslim League in 1946 is an interesting case study. On 12 March 1947, Badshah Khan wrote to Gandhi,

> You are right. Our *ahimsa* is on test. When I see the politicians . . . using the name of religion to propagate hatred, I begin to hate politics. . . . The declaration of Direct Action in Calcutta resulted in communal riots all over India. A few Hindus were killed in Calcutta, but when the Hindus and Sikhs in revenge adopted the League's methods, the Muslims suffered irreparable loss of life and property. To fan the flames the Muslim League under the pretext of avenging Calcutta, let loose hell in Noakhali. The brutal acts made humanity hang its head in shame. The Hindus were caught

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in the net of the British policy of divide and rule, and under the same pretext of avenging Noakhali, they committed atrocities on the innocent Muslims of Bihar. The Muslim Leaguers' wish and prayer to God to usher in the day of expectation to grab power by unfair means and to divide the country was fulfilled. They set fire from one end of the land to the other and smeared their hands in blood and loot. British bureaucracy gloated over the League vandalism. They wanted to paint the Indians as beasts, thirsting for each others' blood, and incapable of behaving as decent human beings. They wanted to convince the Labour government that the British should continue to rule over India, otherwise the Indians would meet their doom through fratricide. Aided by their patrons, the Muslim Leaguers took advantage of the situation to spread anarchy in the land. I was witness to the ruination of the Muslims in Bihar. One hundred fifty thousand were made homeless. Many lost their lives. The Muslim Leaguers wanted to turn their losses to their gain. They advised the stricken Muslims to migrate to Bengal. While I was doing relief work in Bihar, communal riots were started in Multan, Lahore, Amritsar, Ambala, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala and other places in the Punjab, . . . and Peshawar. The Muslim Leaguers attacked and abused Dr Khan Saheb and agitated for his resignation. Innocent people were being slaughtered in the lanes and bazars of Peshawar. Communications were cut off and the city was isolated from the rest of India. During these disturbances the *Khudai Khidmatgars* had fully come up to my expectations, and ten thousand of them rushed to the succour of their Hindu and Sikh brethren in distress and helped to protect their lives and property.[4]

Sardar Patel failed to acknowledge the humanitarian services rendered by Badshah Khan, or the protection offered by Dr Khan Saheb's government. He protested to Gandhi, 'Twenty thousand Hindus and Sikhs have fled from Hazara. . . . Badshah Khan has gone to Bihar where nothing is happening. But he will do as he thinks fit.'[5] Patel's observation was a rejection of the humanitarian work of Badshah Khan.

Abdul Wali Khan condemns the Muslim League for giving a religious colour to a political problem, as a result of which a political battle became a communal battle. Consequently, he argues, even after partition the communal problem remained unresolved; the condition of the Muslims left behind in India was further aggravated by the fact that, whereas formerly they were at the mercy of a Hindu majority, now they were also

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subjected to Hindu anger and hatred, leading to their humiliation and deprivation.[6] He regrets that if partition was inevitable, 'we should have conducted it like sensible and responsible men . . . We became crazy with hatred . . . blood was shed in the name of religion, in the name of Allah, the Merciful.'[7]

Wali Khan also blames the Muslim League for the Calcutta killings. 'Suhrawardy led the Direct Action. The result was predictable . . . The Muslims ignited the spark while the Hindus poured oil. Then the Sikhs created havoc . . . If the Muslims gave the provocation and started the holocaust, they were certainly its worst victims, for they were in the minority in the city.'[8]

If the riots were the outcome of communal politics, then one has to search for the originator of communal politics—the real culprit. But in doing so, one cannot take Wali Khan as the authority, or the sources quoted by him, as the final and the most authentic sources. The investigation needs to be done impartially and dispassionately, and not in a partisan spirit. Wali Khan has his political preferences and leanings, which are manifestly partisan, and hence, questionable. The sources have to be neutral and unbiased, so that history is not distorted. The subject of communal politics has been dealt with in great detail under appropriate chapters, particularly, the ones dealing with the 'Two Nation Theory,' 'Pakistan Movement,' 'Badshah Khan's contemporaries,' etc. In this chapter, the discussion is limited to the riots only. Nehru's attempt to sabotage the Cabinet Mission Plan was not condemned by the Congress. It accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan on the basis of its own interpretation. It refused to accept the interpretation of the authors of the document. It refused to accept judicial interpretation. It refused to accept the Viceroy's arbitration. It declared that it would proceed with constitution-making by majority vote. These provocative actions were designed to reduce the League to a mere spectator at a time when the British, who were the referees between the Congress and the League, were about to exit from the Indian scene. In this scenario, the Muslim League had only two options: either to sit back and watch their political gains being wiped out, or to resist Congress attempts through legitimate means of public protest.

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Public protests were not unusual in India. In the past the Congress itself had organized scores of protests, rallies, boycotts, *Satyagrahas*, non-co-operation movements, as well as the Quit-India Movement. The Muslim League kept aloof from these movements and allowed the issues to be sorted out between the concerned parties. The Muslim League's protest rally was not allowed to remain peaceful and it was confronted with brute force to defeat its purpose.

Some current commentators have also blamed the Muslim League Direct Action Day for triggering communal riots in Calcutta and elsewhere. It is argued that, 'Mr Jinnah called for the observance of Direct Action Day without defining what it meant and how it was going to be observed. Mr Suhrawardy, the Chief Minister of Bengal declared 16 August 1946 a holiday. Since no programme was announced by the Muslim League, the Hindus assumed that Muslims would resort to killing and looting. The Muslim League procession was accompanied by *goondas*. In retaliation, Hindu *goondas* also came on the streets. The streets of Calcutta became rivers of blood.'[9] The author has quoted no witnesses, no authentic source, and no original document. But let us examine his thesis. The Muslim League did not disclose the details of the programme. So the author assumes that the intention was to kill and loot. Also, the Hindus had reasons to believe in advance that it would be violent, so they came prepared, with *goondas*, to counter. The author is aware that Suhrawardy stood for a united Bengal, so much so that when the Partition Plan was announced providing for the partition of Bengal, Suhrawardy approached Jinnah with a request not to partition Bengal. Mr Jinnah agreed, even at the risk of losing Bengal. But the Congress insisted on the partition of Bengal. Let us quote,

> Mr Suhrawardy's scheme of a united Bengal was based on an agreement arrived at between the parliamentary parties of the Bengal Muslim League and the Bengal Congress. When Suhrawardy presented this scheme to Quaid-e-Azam at 10, Aurangzeb Road, New Delhi in the afternoon of 9 April 1947, the Quaid gave his blessings. In fact the Quaid asked him to continue with his negotiations. He also remarked that he did not think that the Congress would agree to this scheme. The next morning Suhrawardy explained the scheme to Lord Mountbatten. The latter said that

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he would recommend to HMG to accept the scheme but only after acceptance of both Muslim League and Congress. On return to Calcutta, Mr Suhrawardy informed Mr Kiran Shankar Roy, the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party of Bengal about the discussion he had in New Delhi, and asked Mr Roy and his colleagues to obtain the approval of the Congress high command.
Mr Roy accompanied by some colleagues went to New Delhi and came back crestfallen without achieving success. This had been forecast by the Quaid-i-Azam. Mr Sarat Chandar Bose who was a senior leader of the Congress and had been a cabinet colleague of Mr Jawarharlal Nehru and who had been a party to this scheme of United Bengal, volunteered to go to Delhi. When Nehru told Mr Bose that the Congress was supporting the partition of Bengal because the people of Bengal wanted such a partition, Mr Bose retorted that only the Hindu *Mahasabha* was making such a demand on being encouraged by the Congress high command.[10]

The tragedy of some politicians and commentators lies in their commitment to a person, a party and a concept, which shuts out objectivity. 16 August 1946, Direct Action Day of the Muslim League was observed all over India, and not only in Calcutta. It was a Friday. Rallies took place after prayers in the afternoon. The meeting ended peacefully in Calcutta. When the processionists were returning after the rally, they were attacked at many places by the Congress and *Mahasabha* mobs. Suhrawardy, who was the head of the administration, and who had a good personal rapport and a working relationship with the Bengali Congress leadership, had no reason to initiate a riot, and create problems for himself, his United Bengal concept, and for the Muslim League, which ruled in Bengal only and in no other province, and which would jeopardise its own objective of a peaceful constitutional transfer of power. If Suhrawardy was riot-prone, trigger-happy and revengeful, he would not have made fool-proof arrangements to ensure that the partition of Bengal, though carried out against his wishes was accomplished peacefully, without a shot being fired and a drop of blood being spilled. Despite Wali Khan's judgement to the contrary, history will rate Suhrawardy as one of the greatest sons of Bengal, who shunned communal prejudice, much like his leader, Mr Jinnah.

On the political plane, the Muslim League had an upper hand in the negotiations. Their interpretation of the Cabinet

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Mission Plan had been vindicated. But the Viceroy was moving to wipe out the gains made by the League. He invited the Congress to form an interim government. At this stage, a peaceful political protest was perfectly in order. But the Congress would not let it pass unchallenged.

The Calcutta holocaust must be judged on the basis of original documentation, undertaken immediately after the occurrence of the event, and not on the basis of hearsay or second hand knowledge. Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan have not recorded their specific findings, which could have been worth quoting. Mirza Abul Hasan Ispahani, a highly respected person, has given an eye-witness account of the Calcutta tragedy of 16-19 August 1946 in his letter of 20 August 1946, addressed to Jinnah. He says:

> Suffice it to say that the trouble started with the Hindus beating up Muslim processions which were going from all sides of Calcutta to the *Maidan* to hear their leaders explain what the Muslim League Working Committee meant by Direct Action, which was to be most peaceful. The Hindus are trying to blame us for the killings but I have seen the beatings and killings started from the Hindus' and Sikhs' side and it was only then that the Muslims retaliated. I strongly suspect that the killings in Calcutta which commenced on 16 August were well planned in advance by the Hindus with the sole object of putting the fright of Moses into the hearts of Calcutta, Bengal and all India Muslims and so to ride them off their course for the demand of Pakistan. I sincerely hope that such tragedy will not be repeated in the history of our sub-continent. We want to remain peaceful if the Hindus allow us this privilege.[11]

The eye-witness account of Mirza Ispahani is in total contrast to the vague and prejudiced generalizations by Wali Khan, based on hearsay and lacking authenticity. Even if the Muslims were in a minority in Calcutta they had an equal right to take out peaceful processions. Unless the attacks on peaceful processions were pre-planned, the Hindus would not have come out in large numbers to attack and kill the processionists.

If the peaceful political protest by the League was made an excuse to trigger bloody riots, it reflected the intolerance of the majority community. Irrespective of whether it was Muslim blood or Hindu blood, it was most unfortunate. It was clear that the Muslim League in fact became the victim of violence

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in the attempt by the Hindus to crush its protest movement and to create panic so that the British would pack up and leave India to the Congress. It is illogical to think that a helpless minority which had, throughout its history, fought the battle on a constitutional plane, and which was aware that bloodshed would only exterminate the minority, would plan to achieve political aims by violent means. History is replete with examples of violence resorted to by the Congress, in the name of non-violence, to achieve political goals. Had the Muslim League planned violence, it would only have given the British a good excuse to crush the Pakistan Movement.

Finally, a word about the alleged failure on the part of the League to specify what exactly it intended to do on the Direct Action Day, a failure which was interpreted by the Hindus to mean a planned bloodbath or an invitation to violence. In the first place, no blueprints of protest movements were ever issued by any party in India. Secondly, Jinnah had made a personal appeal to all the Muslims to conduct themselves peacefully and in a disciplined manner. The Provincial Leagues had already instructed their office bearers to conduct the demonstrations peacefully.[12] Notwithstanding these guidelines by Jinnah, who had never before disregarded constitutional methods, and who made fervent appeals for peaceful protests when compelled by the Congress and the British to resort to street demonstrations, the non-Muslim leadership flexed its muscle in advance for a violent showdown. 'Hindu leaders in Calcutta contributed to the atmosphere of hate by calling on Hindu workers to abstain from *hartal* and resist it by force if necessary.'[13] A prominent Sikh leader in Calcutta declared that if rioting did start the Sikhs would back the Congress and between them they would give the Muslims a good thrashing.[14] The Sikh declaration took for granted that the Congress, as an organization, was violent. The casualties in Calcutta numbered ten thousand. 'The Day passed off peacefully in other provinces —both Muslim majority and Muslim minority. Jinnah condemned the violence in Calcutta.'[15] Some authors have blamed the Muslim League. Others have exonerated it. No judicial verdict is available. But the very fact, that except in Calcutta, which has been dealt with in detail in the preceding paragraphs, the Day remained peaceful throughout India, should

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convince critics that violence was far from the minds of the planners of the Direct Action Day. As to the riots preceeding or succeeding the Day, that was a pattern of India, which is the subject matter of this chapter.

Maulana Azad has taken the Congress to task for the collapse of the Cabinet Mission Plan, and the bitterness it consequently generated. He says,

> Jinnah held that the Congress Working Committee did not still state in categorical terms that the provinces would join the groups envisaged in the Cabinet Mission Plan. The British Government and Lord Wavell generally agreed with League's interpretation on this particular point. . . . I concede that there was force in what Jinnah said. The Congress and the League were both parties to the agreement and it was on the basis of distribution among the centre, the provinces and the groups that the League had accepted the Plan. Congress was neither wise nor right in raising doubts. It should have accepted the Plan unequivocally if it stood for the Unity of India.
>
> When the Indian leaders went to London (3-6 December 1946) to sort out the issue, they failed. Mr Jinnah held that the Constituent Assembly had no right to change the structure of the Plan. The Cabinet Mission held that Muslim League interpretation represented the Cabinet Mission Plan correctly. Mr Jinnah had persuaded the Muslim League to accept the Plan on that basis alone. But [the] Congress opposed [it] and Gandhi supported [the] Congress version. In fairness I have to admit that on this point Jinnah was right. Both justice and expediency demanded that Congress should have accepted the Plan unequivocally. On 6 December [the] British Cabinet issued a statement in which it upheld the point of view of [the] Muslim League on grouping.[16]

Now here was a catch. Communal disturbances had engulfed India.

> The British government faced a dilemma. Wavell wanted the communal question to be sorted out. Atlee felt that unless responsibility was transferred to Indian hands, the stalemate would continue. The alternative was either to crush communal disturbances or transfer power by fixing a date. . . . In fact Hindu-Muslim differences had always been exploited by the British. . . . Atlee was resolved that nobody should ever bring such a charge against the Labour government. . . . We must admit that if his motives

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> were not pure and if he had wished to exploit the Hindu-Muslim differences, he could have done so easily . . . and governed India for another decade . . . France continued in Indo-China for almost ten years. . . . We must therefore give due credit to the British. History will honour them for this judgement . . . [17]

The dilemma of the Labour government was fully exploited by the Congress which was hopeful that, in the midst of the panic caused by communal disturbances, the Labour government would hand power over to it and leave India, specially since at that stage, the League had boycotted the Constituent Assembly. Thus the communal disturbances were seen to yield a windfall in the shape of power to the Congress. In the meanwhile, the Muslim League seeing through the game joined the Interim Cabinet, but continued to boycott the Constituent Assembly to avoid being overrun by a majority vote, which would wipe out the safeguards promised in the Cabinet Mission Plan.

On Mountbatten's arrival (22 March 1947) Azad discussed with him the merits of the Cabinet Mission Plan, and the respective positions of the Congress and the League. Says he, 'Whatever be the reason for stalemate, the League was formally (and legally) right though morally and politically its case was weak. I proposed that both Congress and League agree to refer the question to Lord Mountbatten and accept his arbitration. Neither Nehru nor Patel agreed to this suggestion.'[18]

Such an uncompromising position wrecked the unity of India, and raised communal passions. Azad records that, 'Communal passions rose, and the situation worsened by the deadlock between Congress and League.'[19] Accordingly, on 14 April 1947, Lord Mountbatten wanted a joint appeal to be issued by Gandhi and Jinnah for ending violence, so that negotiations could proceed in an atmosphere of amity. The appeal was drafted by the Viceroy's staff but the Congress leaked it out to the *Hindustan Times* which commented that the appeal would be signed by Acharya Kirpalani. Mountbatten was extremely upset at this breach of trust and informed Nehru about it.[20] This deliberate leak was aimed at destroying the unity of India. The Muslim League case rested on peace and negotiations and hence Jinnah signed the appeal. Gandhi refused to sign the peace

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appeal and explained his refusal by saying that it had no value, since he had never believed in violence.[21] This refusal was yet another manifestation of sabotaging attempts to keep India peaceful and united. The Congressmen thought that Jinnah could not have been sincere in signing the peace appeal. Earlier, on 1 April 1947, Gandhi had already told Mountbatten that the British system of divide and rule had created a situation in which the only alternatives were, a continuation of British rule to keep law and order, or an Indian bloodbath. 'The bloodbath must be faced and accepted.'[22]

By 1944, Gandhi had moved away from the path of peace and had accepted violence as a viable alternative. Japan was no longer in a position to capture India and hand it over to the Congress. Gandhi, who had once asked Britain to surrender to Hitler, now changed his stance: 'The Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief would remain in charge of military operations against Germany, Japan and their allies, and India could be used as a base for such military operations, provided . . . the expenses of military operations would not be borne by India.'[23] Independent observers of the Indian scene are convinced that it was Gandhi and not Nehru alone, who wrecked the Cabinet Mission Plan: 'If it had not been for Gandhi's last minute intervention, the Congress would have accepted the Mission's proposal for an Interim Government, and with a Congress-League Coalition Government installed in the office at the beginning of July, the communal outbreaks of the next few months would never has occurred.'[24] On 13 April 1946, Major Watts records: 'Gandhi thinks that there may well have to be a bloodbath in India before her problems are solved. He would urge non-violence on Congress but does not expect them to observe it. The only thing he expects from Congress in the event of civil war was that they will fight decently and take one tooth for one tooth and not a hundred teeth for one tooth, as the British do.'[25]

Thus Gandhi's prescription to the Indian problem in 1946 was civil war and bloodshed, but a 'civilized' civil war only. It was clear that once permitted, his followers would not stop at 'one tooth' only, but indulge in mass killing. When Gandhi revealed his thesis on 27 August 1946, to Lord Wavell: 'If India wants a bloodbath, she shall have it,' Wavell was shocked to

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hear such words from him.[26] Keeping up his aggressive tone Gandhi 'urged Mountbatten to have the courage to see the truth and act by it, even though the correct solution might mean grievous loss of life . . . on an unprecedented scale.'[27]

What was that 'correct solution' for which a 'bloodbath' on an unprecedented scale was the price? The solution was simple. These threats of war, battle and bloodshed were meant to bully the Muslim League to drop its parity demand, and the British to transfer power to the Congress.[28] Responding to Gandhi's war threats, Liaquat Ali told the Viceroy, 'If there is little the Viceroy can do to sort out the issue, it will be far better for the British to get out and leave the parties to find their own level.'[29] Finding themselves thoroughly intimidated by the Congress on the issue of interpretation of the Cabinet Mission proposals, the Mission members finally proposed that in case of a dispute over the interpretation of the plan, the matter should be referred to the Federal Court. 'The only other test was the test of the battle.'[30] The tone and tenor of the battle cry by the Congress top brass continued to escalate till the partition was announced, implemented, and even thereafter. What is more, even Badshah Khan was carried away by the prevalent atmosphere when he confided in Pyarelal that 'Gandhiji had promised him that independent India would rescue the Pathans if they were threatened by Pakistan.'[31] In the face of all these threats, of a bloodbath by the most powerful party of India, only a miracle could have made a peaceful transfer of power possible.

It is noteworthy that the League had never ever used its street power to launch protest demonstrations like the Congress, for achieving its political ends. Since it had two powerful opponents capable of dealing fatal blows, it had concentrated on constitutional means through dialogue. But in 1946, when it was driven to the wall, and left with no option, it adopted the techniques used by the Congress in 1921 and 1930. Even the summoning of the Cabinet Mission in 1946 by Wavell had come about under the Congress threat of 'Direct Action.' 'At 3.30 p.m, Nehru came in . . . Nehru began by recriminations against methods of Muslim League (Direct Action). Evan Jenkins pointed out that they had used exactly the techniques practised by the Congress in their agitations. . . . Nehru showed signs of working up for one of his outbursts. But the unruffled calm

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and incontrovertible statement of Evan kept him in check.'[32]

The conduct of the Cabinet Mission was manifestly partisan. Publicly the Congress had accepted the Plan. In private conversations with the Mission members and the Viceroy, Gandhi and Nehru had rejected the Plan. Neither the Mission members, who were pro-Congress, nor the Viceroy, nor Maulana Azad who was a witness to these manipulations, dared to expose the duplicity of Gandhi and Nehru. The Mission members would dilly-dally on their interpretation of the Plan. Jinnah, fed up with this conspiracy on the part of the high priests of the Congress and the British government wrote a confidential letter to Prime Minister Attlee on 6 July 1946:

> The Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy have allowed themselves to play into the hands of the Congress, who all along held out the threat of non-co-operation and civil disobedience, if they were not satisfied; and virtually, from the very beginning adopted an aggressive and dictatorial attitude, pistol in their hand . . . Even now, having wrecked the formation of the Interim Government as proposed by the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy in their final statement of 16 June they have accepted the long-term Plan, not in the spirit of co-operation, and to construct, but to wreck it. This will be clear to you from the reservations and interpretations that they have put upon the long-term Plan and which are contrary to those embodied in the statement of the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy dated 25 May (particularly grouping of provinces) .... I therefore trust that the British Government will still avoid compelling the Muslims to shed their blood, for your surrender to the Congress at the sacrifice of the Muslims can only result in that direction. If politics are going to be the deciding factor in total disregard for fairplay and justice, we shall have no other course open to us except to forge our sanction to meet the situation which, in that case is bound to arise. Its consequences I need not say, will be most disastrous and a peaceful settlement will then become impossible.[33]

Jinnah's warning to the Prime Minister was against violence which he feared the Congress would resort to, to unnerve the British and intimidate the Muslims to achieve its political goal.

Badshah Khan and his son Wali Khan believe that the riots led to the partition and that the partition led to the hatred between the Muslims and the Hindus. 'The most dangerous

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consequences of partition was the growing hatred and enmity between the two major communities. This was a natural consequence of communal riots.'[34] Badshah Khan and Wali Khan were fortunate to belong to a Muslim-majority region, where the Pathans were only looked upon by the Hindus as untouchables, but had seldom been subjected to victimization, disgrace, or bloodshed. Their thesis needs to be put to test against the opinion of non-League nationalist Muslims who presided over the Congress. Maulana Azad's judgement on communal discrimination on the part of Hindu Congress leaders and the treatment meted out to non-Hindu leaders like Nariman in Bombay and Dr Syed Mahmood and Hasan Imam in Bihar, has been given in detail elsewhere. He refers to the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held on 14 June 1947:

> There has been in [the] Congress a group who have posed as nationalist but are in fact utterly communal in their outlook. They have always argued that India has no unified culture and have held that whatever Congress may say, the social life of [the] Hindus and Muslims is entirely different. Perhaps the most vocal member of this group of conservatives was Shri Purshottamdas Tandon. . . . In the meetings the members (Hindu) from Sindh opposed (partition) vehemently. In private discussions they were told that if they suffered any disability or indignity in Pakistan, India would retaliate against the Muslims of India . . . When I became aware of such suggestions I was shocked. I immediately saw that this was a dangerous sentiment and could have the most unfortunate and far-reaching repercussions. It implied that partition was being accepted on the basis that in both India and Pakistan, there would be minorities and therefore each government would be held responsible for the security of its minority community . . . The idea of retaliation as a method of assuring the rights of minorities seemed to me barbarous. Later events proved how justified my apprehensions were. The rivers of blood which flowed after partition on both sides of the new frontier grew out of this sentiment of hostages and retaliation . . . I remember Kiran Shankar Rao, Congress leader of Bengal, speaking to Congress President Acharya Kirpalani, on this dangerous hostage theory. He was ridiculed by many and told that if India was divided, the hostage theory must be accepted in order to protect Hindus in Pakistan.[35]

The communal riots attributed to the Muslim League's Direct

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Action and exploited to the maximum by the Congress did not produce any results. The Muslim League's battle ground was the conference table and not the streets. On the conference table, it had scored successes as admitted by Azad. Its joining the interim government put the Congress on the defensive. The Congress would not yield any portfolio which they thought was important:

> So they allotted finance to Liaquat Ali Khan. When Liaquat Ali Khan produced the budget, 'it was based on the Congress declaration . . . he proposed taxation measures which would have taxed all rich men. . . . He also proposed a Commission of enquiry into allegations of tax evasions . . . We were all anxious about socialisation, social equality and distributive justice and (we were all anxious) that all tax evaders should be brought to book. We could not oppose Liaquat's budget in principle. . . . Since, most of the wealth was held by the Hindus, Rajaji and Patel, hinted that the budget was based on communal consideration. I pointed out that budget proposals were in conformity with declared Congress objectives.[36]

This was the straw that broke the back of the Congress whose leaders decided to partition India and get rid of Jinnah and the Muslim League which had begun to challenge Hindu tycoons, tax evaders, hoarders, black marketeers and profiteers, who had been oiling the Congress wheels in India and abroad. Azad very strongly believed that 'till perhaps the very end, Pakistan was for Jinnah a bargaining counter'[37] and, by contrast, 'Patel was fifty per cent in favour of Pakistan even before the arrival of Lord Mountbatten.'[38] Patel was convinced that he could not work with the Muslim League. He openly said that 'he was prepared to have a part of India if only he could get rid of the Muslim League. Patel was the founder of India's partition.'[39] Azad gives an interesting account of how Nehru became pro-partition, 'I have often wondered how Nehru was won over. . . . He is also impulsive and very amenable to personal influences. I think one of the factors responsible for (Nehru's) change was the personality of Lady Mountbatten. She has a most attractive and friendly temperament.'[40] Nehru's sister has given a graphic account of the intimate emotional bond between him and Lady Edwina Mountbatten. Nehru then

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tried to convert Azad 'I told Jawaharlal that I could not possibly accept his views. We were taking one wrong decision after another. . . . The Muslim League had accepted Cabinet Mission Plan (one India) . . . at this stage Nehru as Congress President declared that Congress had not accepted anything . . . I argued that our second mistake arose when Wavell suggested that Home portfolio be given to League. . . . Now a situation had arisen where we were becoming greater supporters of partition than Jinnah. . . . History would never forgive us. . . . The verdict would be that India was divided not by the Muslim League but by Congress.[41] Many Indian intellectuals believe that Nehru had sabotaged the Cabinet Mission Plan deliberately because in his view, Congress and Muslim League could not coexist.'[42] When Azad met Gandhi again,

> I received the greatest shock of my life to find that he had changed. He no longer spoke so vehemently against partition. He repeated arguments that Patel already used. I pleaded in vain. . . . Another reason why Congress agreed to partition was the weak centre proposed under the provincial autonomy under the Cabinet Mission Plan. . . . Patel was inspired by the argument that by giving up small pieces in the North West and North East, India can build up a strong centre.[43]

Having thus decided to get rid of Jinnah and the Muslim League by partitioning India, the Congress leaders concentrated their attention on inflicting maximum damage; firstly, by forcing the partition of Punjab and Bengal, and, thereafter, by manoeuvring to have the boundary of the divided provinces demarcated to the maximum disadvantage of Pakistan. The Congress refused to pay Pakistan's cash balances worth Rs. 550.00 million in order to cripple its economy and upset its financial viability. The Congress held onto Pakistan's share of military stores and equipment to weaken Pakistan's army. They provoked the Sikhs to indulge in killing Muslims. They encouraged the creation of General Mohan Singh's army in East Punjab which created a holocaust. They incited unwilling Sindhi Hindus to migrate to India so that the Karachi port and the country's trade would be paralysed. All this was pre-planned to create chaos, and uncertainty, and to ultimately cause the collapse of the new State.[44]

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On the Partition issue, the fate of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Sikh leaders has a striking resemblance. The Khan brothers put their faith in the Congress. The Congress abandoned them when they were no longer required as pawns. Like Badshah Khan, the Sikh leadership became paranoid, too. In the beginning, Master Tara Singh and Sardar Baldev Singh pinned their hopes on the Congress because they though that India would not be divided. But when it dawned on them that Congress would go for partition, Sikh leaders like Giani Kartar Singh started having second thoughts. But, like Badshah Khan, they did not know how to give a concrete shape to their own aspirations. Jinnah had told them that as a substantial group they should join Pakistan so that the division of Punjab—and its likely repercussion—could be avoided. But they wanted the status of an independent country. So they went back to the Congress and opted to join India. The Sikhs wobbled. They wrecked the unity of the Punjab and destroyed themselves politically.[45]

Unlike Badshah Khan and Wali Khan, enlightened Indians believe that neither Jinnah, nor the Muslim League ever wanted the non-Muslims to leave Pakistan. By his inclination, political background, training, and secular outlook Jinnah's instincts were against the carnage that took place.[46] The bloodbath or the holocaust was planned and executed to undo Pakistan. For evidence, let us turn to the diaries and correspondence of the Britishers whose credibility has been authenticated by Wali Khan.

Alan Campbell Johnson in his diary *Mission with Mountbatten* says:

> *14 June 1947:*
> Leaders' speeches have calmed down the political atmosphere. Nevertheless Sikh unrest in Punjab is growing hourly. The implications of 3 June are now all too clear to the Sikh people. They see that partition of India means the partition of Sikhs and they feel themselves to be sacrificed on the altars of Muslim ambitions and Hindu opportunism. . . . Sikh influence in Punjab was out of proportion to their numbers. With partition they are trapped and no juggling of a boundary commission can prevent their bisection. They react accordingly and their leaders, hopelessly out-manoeuvred in the political struggle, began to invoke primitive

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remedies . . . Sikhism, based on a most complex religious and social structure, does not enjoy leadership of high quality. Baldev Singh, Defence Minister, is a voice in the wilderness. Power is passing to the wilder men such as Master Tara Singh, some other younger men. Rough weather lies ahead of us.

5 August 1947:
Mountbatten in secret meeting with Patel, Jinnah and Liaquat, . . . briefing on Punjab Criminal Investigation Department, sent by Governor Jenkins . . . intelligence sources implicated the Sikh leaders in a number of sabotage plans, including a plot to assassinate Jinnah during the State drive at the Independence Day celebration in Karachi next week. Jinnah and Liaquat immediately demanded arrest of Tara Singh and other Sikh leaders. Patel opposed, arguing that it would precipitate a crisis already beyond control. Mountbatten wrote to Governor designates of West and East Punjab, as a matter of urgency, the desirability of arresting Tara Singh and his more hot-headed colleagues shortly before 15 August 1947.

27 August 1947:
Mountbatten said that Sikhs had launched an attack just as Giani Kartar Singh and Tara Singh before 3 June had told him they would. Mountbatten had expostulated with them at the time, stressing that the British would have gone. It would be Indians fighting Indians. But they were adamant, and had in fact observed that they were waiting for us to go. The situation was now out of their control. In an area . . . only about the size of Wales, some ten million people were on the move. At this moment, through the withdrawal of the Muslims, the police in the East Punjab were suddenly and catastrophically seven thousand under-strength.

28 August 1947:
News came through of a savage attack on lorry of non-Muslim refugees from Sialkot. At 10.30 p.m Lady Mountbatten was in close session with Tara Singh, who is atleast beginning to tremble at the wrath he has so readily invoked. . . . The refugees are now in a state of mass hysteria. Neither side has any trust in the intentions, assurances and actions of the other dominion.

12 September 1947:
a telephone came through from Liaquat asking him (Nehru) to come to Lahore for a meeting on the convoy problem. It is assuming serious proportions in view of the uncertainty about the Sikh attitude to a very large Muslim convoy passing through Amritsar. Nehru at first was unwilling to go to Lahore, saying he could see no use in the visit, but Mountbatten pleaded with him that it was vital

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for regular contact between the two Prime Ministers to be maintained, and declared that the whole reputation of the Government was at stake on the successful clearance of their major refugee convoy.

14 September 1947:
Lord Ismay in Karachi. Apparently, Jinnah was full of wrath against Congress, saying he could never understand these men's hatreds and was now beginning to feel that there was no alternative but to fight it out. Ismay assured him that the government of India was determined to put down the troubles to the best of their ability.

15 September 1947:
Mountbatten's analysis is that the Muslims and Hindus are under the control of their respective governments in approximately equal ratios. He asked about the Sikh motives. Was their objective to set up a Sikh State? VP Menon replied no. Politically they had lost out and had not even gained the Jullandar division. Their motive was almost revenge. VP's son was operating with three Sikhs who had lost their families. Their only objective was two Muslim lives for every one of their relatives. Tara Singh, he felt, was essentially a frightened man.

22 September 1947:
He quotes an article in *London Times* saying 'what causes their desires, their infectious hysteria.' Western parliamentary democracy required certain basic conditions for its success, none of which obtains in India. . . . One of the symptoms of the disease is that each side passionately believes the other to be solely responsible. . . . . Either all parties concerned are responsible . . . or else there are certain cataclysms in human affairs in which men do not retain control over their destinies.

23 September 1947:
If partition meant immense economic sacrifice for the Sikhs, it also entails political concentration. Lying within easy reach of Delhi, they may comprise, after mass migration, some 50 per cent of the total population of the new East Punjab province. Informal observers see in this situation all the ingredients of a Sikh national movement, and consider that already the solution which had been mooted of creating a new Indian province of Sikhistan. . . . They may well hold the balance of power in their obscure struggle.

9 November 1947:
Turning to Bengal situation (said) that it was wonderful to see that Bengal had been free of communal disturbance, in fact the

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East and West Bengal Governments have been working to date on a closer understanding than East and West Punjab. . . .

22 December 1947:
Robert Stimson of BBC visits Karachi. . . . He thought the Sindhi Muslims were not so bitter as those in the West Punjab and although Karachi was safer for Hindus than Delhi was for Muslims, the Hindus there were under a constant cloud of threat, and petty persecution . . . there has been a whole exodus of bank staffs and a complete break down of Hindu economy, on which so much of the State depended.

12 January 1948:
Gandhi decided to go to fast unto death as a result of India's refusal to pay Pakistan's cash balances and assets amounting to fifty five crores, a step which Mountbatten called un-statesmanlike and unwise.

17 January 1948:
Gandhi is now very weak. Gandhi said he had laid down seven conditions, all affecting the basic security and civil rights of Muslims both in Delhi and India as whole. . . .

18 January 1948:
Sikhs chanting outside Birla House, 'Let Gandhi die'.

30 January 1948:
Gandhi assassinated by a member of Hindu *Mahasabha*.

To continue quoting from Campbell-Johnson's diary:

Partition of Punjab involved the partition of Sikhs; this was the outcome of partition of Punjab, upon which the Sikh leaders insisted. Mountbatten was surprised at the vehemence of their attitude, in view of the price they would have to pay for it, but was given no practicable alternative by them . . . the violent reaction in the Punjab . . . the people (non-Muslims) rose up against their leaders' (Congress) acceptance of partition. . . . The (Sikh) operations were mostly carried out by small groups with cleverly planned mobile attacks on trains and villages. It was in fact a rank and file revolt, and any action to arrest the wilder Sikh leaders—seriously considered at the time, but rejected—would have been more likely to have touched off or intensified the disorder than to have brought it under control. The Punjab trouble must be regarded as a cataclysm. But in the context of India as a whole they were in fact, limited to 3 per cent of the population and were hardly comparable as a human tragedy to the Bengal famine of 1943. Finally it should be

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remembered that Partition did not cause this communal crisis, but the communal crisis was the cause of Partition.[47]

Sir Feroze Khan Noon relates an incident which gives a deep insight into the Sikh mind before independence, and will explain how its proclivity for communal preferences could be easily channelled into hatred. He says, 'I remember in the Punjab, before independence, I suggested to my colleague, Sir Jogindra Singh, in charge of Excise, that he should open liquor shops in Jullandar district, because the Sikhs were buying and selling illicit liquor freely and the government was losing revenue. In these circumstances, it was better that shops should be opened; but he did not agree with me and the reason he gave me was that the bootleggers were all Sikhs and whatever illicit liquor was sold and profit made, the money was kept within the community, but if the government liquor shops were opened, the excise duty income would go to the government coffers and this would be shared by Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims alike, who would benefit by the government's building schools, hospitals and roads. . . . This example will show how communal differences adversely affected the administration in the sub-continent.'[48]

The communal crisis which continued to escalate in India, and which could not be resolved because the majority community failed to adopt a policy of give and take, inevitably led to partition. Mr Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, one of the most respected leaders, an inheritor of the Indian nationalist tradition, committed to socialism and a secular united India, was an old associate of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Abdul Wali Khan, who also went to Delhi as Khan of Kalat's emissary to offer Kalat's accession to India[49]. He has lamented that, 'the Congress committed a grave blunder by going back on the Cabinet Mission Plan, that there could be no better solution of India's political future—that would have taken care of the sub-continent's strategic environment. Muslim reactionaries on the one hand and the Hindu communalists with their linkages in Congress on the other, both contributed to wreck the Cabinet Mission Plan. A united India of Hindu Mahasabha's conception which enjoyed the support of Sardar Patel was not a feasible proposition. That left no other way except partition. After

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Gandhiji's martyrdom India adopted an isolationist approach. Some Indian leaders perhaps believed that Pakistan would not survive . . . and would collapse. This was absolutely disastrous. India should have tried to win the confidence of the people here. That might have brought about the government committed to a policy of friendship towards India instead of hostility.'[50]

The reader should now be able to form his own judgement as to the origin of the communal crisis, and the bloodbath that took place on the soil of India for decades before independence, after the Congress shot down the Cabinet Mission Plan, after Mountbatten announced the Partition Plan and during the completion of Partition formalities. It would be worthwhile mentioning the unbroken chain of communal riots in India, during the last four decades. The number of riots would run into thousands. The worst ones occurred in Bombay and Rajasthan over forcible conversions of Muslims by *Shiva Sena*, in Bihar over some untouchables embracing religions other than Hinduism and for similar reasons, in Ahmadabad and in Ayodhya. If religious differences were politicised by the Muslim League and Jinnah, to aggravate the tensions, these elements have ceased to exist in India since 1947, and one must find other causes for the communal problem in India after 1947. But Khan Wali Khan believes that the partition has left a legacy of hatred and intolerance and the Hindus have turned their wrath on the Muslims. In other words, he believes that the ghost of Jinnah and the Muslim League is still haunting the Indians and, by implication, it will continue to haunt them for as long as India remains divided. If we go by that hypothesis, it will be fair to say that the ghost of the Afghans and Moghuls ruling India for a thousand years did in fact haunt India all the time and that Hindus did in fact settle the score by turning that wrath upon the Muslims after the British left India.

On this issue, Maulana Azad has spoken with greater clarity than the Khans:

> It may be argued that if Pakistan was so much against the interests of the Muslims themselves, why should such a large section of Muslims be swept away by its lure? The answer is to be found in the attitude of certain communal extremists among the Hindus. When the Muslim's began to speak of Pakistan, they (the Hindus) read into the scheme a sinister pan-Islamic conspiracy and began

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> to oppose it out of fear that it foreshadowed a combination of Indian Muslims with trans-Indian Muslim states. This opposition acted as an incentive to the adherents of the League. With simple, though untenable logic, they argued that if Hindus were so opposed to Pakistan, surely it must be of benefit to the Muslims. . . . The basis of Pakistan is the fear of interference by the centre in the Muslim majority areas. . . . I am one of those who considers the present chapter of communal bitterness and differences as a transient phase in Indian life. I firmly hold that they will disappear when India assumes the responsibility of her own destiny. When India attains her destiny she will forget the chapter of communal suspicions and conflict and face the problem of modern life from a modern point of view. Differences will no doubt persist but they will be economic not communal. . . . If it be argued that this is only a faith which events may not justify, I would say that in any case the nine crores of Muslims constitute a factor which no body can ignore and whatever the circumstances, they are strong enough to safeguard their destiny.[51]

Azad's own remedy for communal bitterness was the Cabinet Mission Plan, which by his own admission was accepted by the League and rejected by the Congress. He was convinced that Pakistan and the two-nation theory were Jinnah's bargaining chips to ensure safeguards for the Muslims in united India. He also claims that the Congress, instead of bargaining on safeguards, forced partition on India. As to his faith that an independent India would be fair to Muslims, that was the faith of a visionary and not of a practical politician. Post-independence communal riots, which followed the pre-independence pattern, belied his faith. Let us hear from Gauba on this issue: 'Then came the great Islamic Summit in Rabat (1969) . . . the government of India was not slow to claim Indian representation on the grounds of her concern with Indian's sixty (now over one hundred) million Muslims. The Summit promptly decided to invite representation of the Muslims of India. . . . Indian delegation consisted of three Muslims and three non-Muslims, including a Sikh.' India did not trust Muslims to exclusively represent Indian Muslims. 'The Indian (mixed) delegation would have been welcomed nevertheless, but for the thoughtless declaration from Delhi that any enquiries at Rabat about the Ahmadabad (riots) and the number of Muslims dead, would be regarded as interference in India's internal affairs. . . . At

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Ahmadabad, arson, murder, carnage had become common place events . . . though there had been several communal outbursts in India eversince the partition, none like what was being witnessed at Ahmadabad had ever happened before. Property worth crores of rupees had been reduced to ashes, thousands lay dead in the streets. . . . More than thirty thousand Muslims were rendered homeless, thousands were in refugee camps.'[52]

The Ahmadabad bloodbath shook the world conscience but India warned the Rabat Summit not to take note of it. However, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan could not be a silent spectator of this ghastly scene. 'After Rabat came Badshah Khan. Within hours of his arrival, he went on a three day fast. World attention was once more focussed on the condition of Muslim minority in India and the communal strife rampant in the country.'[53]

On the eve of the 1989 general elections, Rajiv Gandhi promised the voters that he would create *Ram Raj* in India. He did not elaborate but neither was it needed. This undertaking was given in the aftermath of Hindu-Muslim tension in Ayodhya over the Babri mosque issue. The elections were preceded by widespread communal riots in many states—some of the worst in India's history. Many Muslim intellectuals believed that, whereas in the pre-independence period, communal riots were provoked by religious intolerance deeply ingrained in India, the riots in post-independence India were engineered to consolidate political and economic gains. The recent examples include Moradabad, Aligarh, Meerut, Hyderabad, Ahmadabad, Agra, etc., where Muslim artisans have managed to organize themselves by minimizing the economic stranglehold of the traditional money-lender—the *bania* and the *mahajan*.

India has thousands of years of history with numerous faiths, philosophies, cults, and beliefs, each having its own place of worship. India's land mass should have had millions of temples and places of worship; hundreds of thousands of them exist today but most have been obliterated by the vagaries of weather, time, history. What is left must be preserved through mutual respect, tolerance and accommodation. Intolerance has ravaged India through the centuries and will continue to ravage it. Today, it is the Babri mosque, tomorrow it could be the Jamia-Masjid, the Taj Mahal, or some other shrine or a place of worship, built by successive generations on the ruins of what could have

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been sacred to previous generations. Ayodhya has a large number of temples, several of them claiming to be the site of the birth place of god Rama, who is believed to be the seventh incarnation of Lord Krishna, having come to life as son of King Dashrat, the King of Oudh. Some believe that Rama is a mythological figure. The Babri Mosque has existed where it is since the sixteenth century, and no authentic evidence can question its legitimacy. India will not grow in stature by demolishing the mosque, nor will its stature diminish if it preserves it. Nor can Islam be obliterated by religious intolerance. What India needs is a vision of history and a spirit of tolerance and accommodation, so as to project its beauty and richness in variety and diversity. The glory of India's past can be sustained only through mutual respect. Unfortunately, a vast majority of Indians still believes that Indian and Hindu are synonymous, and that there is no room for a non-Hindu in India.

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7

Badshah Khan and the Pakistan Movement

Abdul Ghaffar Khan's first reaction to the Lahore Resolution (1940) of the Muslim League was non-committal. The occasion was the All-India Congress Committee meeting held at Allahabad from 29 April to 2 May 1942. Rajagopal Achari introduced a resolution recommending the acceptance of the Lahore Resolution, in principle, as a basis of settlement between the Congress and the League. Rajaji's move was rejected, whereupon he resigned from the Congress Working Committee in protest. Badshah Khan was requested by a newsman to comment on the draft resolution. He said, 'You know I have resigned from the Congress. I am a soldier. I mind my business. I have always tried to keep myself out of all controversies, because I consider such controversies useless in the present circumstances. [The] Press was responsible for the importance which the Pakistan issue has gained. We have been enjoying the right of self-determination in the Frontier since a long time and I think there could be no harm if others enjoy the same. There is no need, however, to assume that my support for the recognition of the right of self-determination means any abrupt change of our attitude.'[1] The Khan did hint at the possibility of some gradual change in his attitude but that did not take place. On the contrary, his attitude stiffened in direct proportion to the opposition by Gandhi. But he did concede the right of self-determination, in principle to others, as he claimed it was enjoyed by the Pathans, in practice, in the Frontier in 1942! However when the time came for others to claim self-determination, he opposed it.

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Two years earlier, immediately after the passage of the Muslim League's Lahore Resolution, the Congress Working Committee met on 18 April 1940, to consider if the Congress should launch a civil disobedience movement to put pressure on the British at a time when they were faced with the crisis of war. Gandhi predicted that the movement would fail for various reasons. 'Firstly, there is neither discipline nor honesty in the Congress. Secondly, the communal disharmony, manifested in [the] Muslim League attitude, was an obstacle. Thirdly, the terrorism of the *Khaksars* militated against non-violence.' At this stage, the top nationalist Muslim leaders openly defended the attitude of the Muslims. Dr Syed Mahmud suggested that there was a need to analyse the Muslim opposition to Congress. He felt that the Congress was largely responsible for the present tension, that the question had to be understood in a historical perspective, that the process of Hindu assimilation of Muslim culture had been going on in India for centuries and was continuing. 'Today there was nothing in India which was distinctly Muslim. Every reform movement in India brought about further assimilation. Gandhi's reforms also meant more Hindu revival than anything else. In his scheme of reforms, there was no place for Muslims. The Congress was also guided by the spirit of Hindu revival.' His experience was that whenever efforts were made to achieve anything for the Muslims there was resistance from Hindu Congressmen.[2]

Dr Syed Mahmud demolished the secular pretensions of the Congress, exposed the fanatic Hindu revivalist intentions of the Congress leaders, including Gandhi, and unveiled their real intentions of eliminating Muslims from the soil of India. He did so as his predecessors and great Muslim nationalist leaders, Maulana Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali, had done in 1929 and 1930. While Mr Jinnah never disputed the national character of the Congress till the Lucknow League (1937), and often referred to Gandhi as Mahatma Gandhi, till the second Round Table Conference (1931), Maulana Mohammed Ali, the great hero of the Khilafat Movement and a comrade of Gandhi, had this to say in 1930 : 'Gandhi's movement is not a movement for the complete independence of India but for making the seventy million Musalmans dependent on the Hindu

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Mahasabha.'[3] In a similar vein, Maulana Shaukat Ali, wrote to Ansari on 19 May 1929: 'For any honourable peace and pact we are always ready, but not for the slavery of the Hindus . . . the Congress has ceased to be national now. It has become an adjunct of the Hindu Mahasabha.'[4]

Badshah Khan had the rare opportunity to do the same, and, had he done so, the chances are that, on the basis of his control over the strategic Frontier and his close personal ties with Kabul, his voice would have been heard, the Congress would have been more accommodating, and he could have saved India from partition. While he was 'already enjoying self-determination in the Frontier,' he left other Muslims to fend for themselves. He did not realise that, left to themselves, they could generate a tidal wave, which could sweep away Badshah Khan himself, as happened in 1947.

Another warning was given to the Congress Working Committee in the same meeting by the top Congress Muslim leader, Mr Asif Ali who said, 'Many Muslims asked questions which were not always easy to reply. For instance, they asked why great leaders, who had previously been with the Congress, had ceased to be with the Congress. Why, again, is Iqbal's song, *Hindustan Hamara* no more sung, at the Congress meetings and why is only *Bande Mataram* is sung. They also asked what Congress had done for the Muslims during the last twenty years. It had done so much for the untouchables. After all, Harijan uplift meant Hindu unity. Then there was the question of Hindi and Urdu. The majority of the Muslims were with the Muslim League.'[5] If, as Wali Khan now claims Iqbal's *Hindustan Hamara* was a call for India's unity, why then did the Congress discard it?

Both Dr Syed Mahmud and Asif Ali had the moral courage to challenge Gandhi and the other Hindu leaders of the Congress face to face, and warn them of the changing direction of Indian politics and the new wave of self-assertion among the Muslims which, as they saw, had strengthened the ranks of the Muslim League. They were frank, forthright, honest and courageous. They minced no words. They did not accuse Jinnah and the Muslim League of being British agents and fanning communal hatred. In their eyes, Jinnah and the Muslim League were no less nationalist than the Congress. However, these Muslim

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intellectuals, who knew the true face of the Congress, were held back from defecting from the Congress by the personality of Maulana Azad, who firmly believed that the Muslim leaders of the Muslim minority provinces must continue their struggle within the Congress, otherwise, should India be partitioned due to Congress obduracy, the Muslim minority in India would be left without any senior level leadership.

The political tug of war on the basis of the Lahore Resolution was fought in the 1945 elections. The Muslim League captured almost all the Muslim seats in the Central Assembly. In the Punjab Assembly the Unionists and the Muslim League were balanced. In Sindh the Muslim League won a large number of votes but could not achieve a majority. In Bengal, the Muslim League was the largest single party. Considering that the Muslim League had been properly organized only five years earlier on the basis of a definite goal given by the Lahore Resolution, the results were impressive. The previous elections had been held in 1937, when the manifesto of the Muslim League was similar to that of the Congress and their goals were not divergent. The object then was to work together, and the Muslim League's poor performance was therefore hardly relevant. In 1945, the battle lines were clearly drawn and the Muslim League's win was impressive.

The failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan (discussed elsewhere) has been attributed to Nehru but one of the main considerations for the Congress to bury the Plan was that in the North Western Zone, the Frontier province had to be linked with Sindh and Punjab. Since this did not reflect the will of the Frontier people at that time Badshah Khan did not agree, even though there was a provision that he could opt out later. Had he consented he could have avoided India's partition. The Mission Plan had given enough leverage to the centre in Delhi to manipulate the eventual delinking of the Frontier from Punjab and Sindh. Azad was aware of this and he did all he could to persuade the Congress to go along with the Plan, as interpreted by the Cabinet Mission.

The failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan brought Badshah Khan in direct confrontation with the Muslim League, in a do-or- die kind of a situation. Having shot down the Mission Plan, the onus was now on him to consolidate the gains and reinforce

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the loyalty of the Pathans to the Congress. He began to see the writing in the wall. On 14 September 1946, addressing the *Khudai Khidmatgars* in Daubi (Frontier) he said: 'Perhaps you know that the police, the Khans, and the feudal lords do not enjoy the prestige they once did. The religious divines are no more looked upon with awe and reverence. . . . It is wrong to say that the Hindu *Raj* has been established by the installation of the Congress interim government. . . . The door is open to the Muslim League to enter the government and form a Muslim *Raj*.'[6] He equated the Muslim League's joining the interim government of India with 'Muslim *Raj*.'

Gradually, support for the Congress began to erode. Some Pathan Congressmen, including Abdul Qayyum Khan, deserted the Congress, and five thousand volunteers resigned. Thousands of Pathans greeted Nehru with black flags at Peshawar airport on 16 October 1946, which angered Nehru and unnerved Dr Khan Saheb, the Chief Minister.

Seeing the ground slipping from under their feet, the Khan brothers put the blame on the British Governor and political officers. The Congress expected that, in their scheme of things, all the princely states and the tribal areas would become a part of India. When Abdul Ghaffar Khan was asked whether he favoured bringing the tribal areas under the Indian government, he replied, 'I am a non-violent man and I do not want that the tribesmen be by force brought within our fold. I would leave the choice entirely with them. How can any Congressman even dream of curtailing the freedom our brothers are enjoying?'[7] At that point of time the Khan could not be expected to anticipate the brute force which India's Interior Minister, Sardar Patel, would adopt to grab the vast regions ruled by the Princes. By contrast, when Pakistan came into being, the Governor General of Pakistan signed a treaty with the tribesmen by which they would continue to enjoy the same freedom as they did before the emergence of Pakistan.

Badshah Khan never claimed to be a politician and he had no formal education at a high level to articulate his opinions. His son, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, a Western educated and respected politician of Pakistan, has however, articulated his father's thoughts. He says, 'I firmly believe that the scheme of Pakistan was not intended for the benefit of the Muslims. The

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British needed an Islamic bastion [running] from Turkey to China. . . . This was an Islamic wall that was raised against the ideology of USSR. If this interest could be served by Islam and the Muslim League, what better luck could they have. So the Simla Conference of 1945 had only one purpose—to impress upon the Muslims that if anyone wanted to be recognized and represented, the only course open to him was to sign up with the Muslim League.'[8]

A charge of this nature had never been made before and therefore, it needs to be analysed. Having determined the goal of dividing India in 1945, the British, Wali Khan believes, had to find an instrument in the shape of a party and its leader. That party, according to the Khan was the Muslim League and the leader was Jinnah. In his assessment, the British plan was to first unite the Indian Muslims under a proper organization and then to tell the world that they were unable to relinquish power because of hostility between the Hindus and the Muslims.[9] Wali Khan quotes from a series of letters to reveal the British plan. These are:

1. Viceroy's letter, 1 January 1925, to the Secretary of State, 'The bridge Gandhiji had built to span the gulf between Hindus and Mohammedans has not only broken down, but, I think it has completely disappeared. . . . There is no outstanding man to compose the differences and lead them.' At this point, Wali Khan says that the British were shocked that Jinnah had declared his support for joint electorates. He says that efforts began to persuade him to support separate electorates.
2. Viceroy's letter, 20 May 1929, 'I had a long talk with Jinnah . . . which made it very clear that he and all the Bombay people, who are not disposed to Congress were disposed to swing towards our direction if we can give them help later.'
3. Viceroy's letter, 21 March 1929, 'The two wings of Muslim League are to meet in Delhi . . . with rapprochement between Sir Mohammed Shafi and Jinnah. Jinnah may be expected to gain.
4. Viceroy's letter, 26 November 1929, 'I hear that suggestions are being put out that government should

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intervene in some way towards raising funds in order to organize proper Muslim representation. . . .'

5. Viceroy's letter, 2 February 1931, 'Sir Fazl-e-Hussain developed the view that the only chance of some progress was that a strong party should come into being which should devote itself to fight the Congress.'
6. Lord Irwin's letter, 9 February 1931, 'I told Sir Shafi that I thought they would all have to fight hard and that it was no good supposing that few meetings . . . would do the job. . . . They may be able to build up a great organization which must focus all . . . efforts to fight the Congress. . . .'
7. On 31 October 1932, the Viceroy wrote, 'Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims are to meet on 3 November, at Allahabad to arrive at an agreement. I am assured by those who know that no agreement will ever be reached.'
8. On 9 September 1934, the Viceroy wrote, 'But alas, ours are a flabby crowd without any courage, while the Congress, however, stupid their actions, are not afraid of fighting.'
9. On 24 September 1934, the Viceroy wrote, 'I have written to governors asking them to give a hint to the ministers to help pro-government candidates. . . .'
   But, says Wali Khan, in the 1937 elections, eight out of eleven provinces went to the Congress and the British were in serious trouble. They, therefore, had to find an effective alternative. Enter Jinnah.
10. On 9 September 1937, the Viceroy wrote, 'Jinnah took strongly the view that we did not pay sufficient attention to the Muslims, that there was the real risk of Muslims being driven into the arms of Congress.'
11. On 19 August 1938, the Viceroy wrote, 'Jinnah ended up with the suggestion that we should keep the centre as it is now and make friends with Muslims by protecting them in Congress provinces, and if we did that, the Muslims will protect us in the Centre.'
12. On 29 January 1939, the Viceroy wrote, 'I gathered further that a resolution was actually passed at Patna saying that League would no longer be able to stand aside if Congress intervention in the affairs of the states continued.'

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Then came the Second World War. Wali Khan claims that Sir Sikandar convinced the Viceroy not to give any importance to Jinnah.

13. On 31 August 1939, the Viceroy wrote : 'Sikandar's admirable statement . . . has spiked the guns of Jinnah and the Muslim League. . . . The chances of break (within League) are considerable. I do not propose to make any move with Jinnah until there is an outbreak of war or some other development necessitating immediate contact with all party leaders.'[10]
14. On 5 September 1939, the Viceroy wrote, 'I feel it wiser to be patient with Jinnah and endeavour to lead him into the direction which we desire. And indeed if I can give any help to these Muslim leaders to get more together than they are at the moment I shall do so.'
15. On 7 October 1939, the Viceroy wrote, 'Nawab Ismail repeated that it was essential that any declaration should make it clear that a democratic system at the Centre is not acceptable to the Muslim community and went on to urge that the Congress claim to speak for India and to control Defence was perfectly inadmissible.'
16. On 5 October 1939, the Viceroy wrote, 'Jinnah thanked me with much graciousness for what I had done to assist him in keeping his party together and expressed great gratitude for this.'[11]
17. Viceroy's letter 4 December 1939, 'I am fully alive, as my letter to you about Jinnah's questions will have shown, to the objection to allowing the Muslim minority to turn itself into a majority with the right of veto and that does seem to appear to be a position that we can (not?) accept.'
18. Report of British Central Intelligence: 'Having held detailed discussions with different Muslim groups such as League, Wahabis, Khaksars, and others with special interest in Afghanistan and tribal areas, I have concluded that differences between Hindus and Muslims have reached a point at which there is only one solution—partition. Then, shortly, [a] nation of Muslim India must be established.

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'Such (Russian) aid is out of question. If once Bolshevik aid is accepted, Islamic principles will be submerged. And if an opportunity is given to Russian influence to be felt South of Oxus, all Muslim nations will degenerate to the level of Soviet Central Asiatic (Muslim) States.'

Wali Khan quotes the Viceroy as having frankly stated that the success of this scheme may result in Muslim forces uniting to form a solid front against the Russians, that Pan-Islamism may become a bulwark against the Bolsheviks.

19. Viceroy's meeting with Jinnah on 6 February 1940: The Viceroy repeated again and again that he was tired of Jinnah's arguments. 'At the risk of wearing him I was bound to repeat that it was quite useless to appeal for support in Great Britain for a party whose policy was sheer negation.'[12]
20. On 21 April 1940, the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State: 'All I can say is that if the Congress are set on having a fight here, they are going to have a fight not only with us, but also with the Muslims.'[13]
21. The author quotes Viceroy Linlithgow warning the leaders of the Muslim League that the government of Great Britain would not tolerate negative politics.[14]
22. He quotes Lord Zetland, Secretary of State, having heard from Sir Feroze Khan Noon what Pakistan meant, saying that he saw 'almost insuperable difficulties in the way of our acceptance of such a policy.'[15]
23. 14 May 1940, Viceroy's letter to Secretary of State: '. . . there is no important Muslim element outside Muslim League. . . . Indeed, I am sure that Jinnah remains the man to deal with on the Muslim side.'
24. On 24 May 1940, the Viceroy wrote 'Meanwhile the Khaksars have renewed to offer 50,000 men to help in the War. . . . Jinnah accepts no responsibility for the Khaksars or their activities since they have declined his advice.'[16]
25. On 10 July 1940, the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State: 'I hope that Jinnah will not continue to press his extravagant claim. If he does, I think myself, that we

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may definitely have to consider whether we should not let the . . . of the Muslim League, as represented by Sikandar and Fazlul Haq, have their break with Jinnah. But I don't want to see such a break if we can reasonably avoid it.'[17]

26. On 28 August 1940, the Viceroy wrote, 'I hope Sikandar and Fazlul Haq will be able to bring pressure on Jinnah to make him toe the line; if he does not, I shall go without him.'[18]
27. On 29 August 1940, the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State, 'You may be amused to hear that Sir Akbar Haydari during our conversation coyly hinted that if there should be any trouble with Jinnah and Muslim League, there was, at any rate, a prominent Muslim (the Nizam of Hyderabad) who could steer the country through the troubled waters that may lie ahead.'[19]
28. In the same context, he quotes the Viceroy, 'I still think it important to hold the Muslim League together if we can do so. And in those circumstances there is nothing for it but to be patient with Jinnah, though one's patience is beginning, definitely, to run out.'[20]
29. Wali Khan quotes from the Viceroy's letter of 5 September 1940, informing the Secretary of State that Jinnah had made the demand that the 'Muslim League should be taken into full and equal partnership with His Majesty's Government in the ruling of this country, and authority shared with them.'
30. On 11 September 1940, the Viceroy again wrote, 'Jinnah is subjected to very considerable criticism from various sections of the community. He has against him the Prime Ministers of two majority Muslim provinces. The line he has taken (by rejecting Muslim League participation in the Viceroy's Advisory Council) is unsympathetic to large numbers of Muslims of positions, even of Muslims in minority provinces such as Bihar and UP'
31. Wali Khan quotes Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy saying that the Congress had no objection to Britain handing over power to Jinnah. But Jinnah refused the offer. Wali Khan terms this refusal a 'fine display of arrogance, deceit, cruelty, cunning, notoriety,' in short all 'British

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attributes' faithfully transcribed in the code book of the Muslim League. He claims that if Jinnah really cared about Islam and the rights of the Muslims, he would never have refused the offer to govern the whole of India.

32. 4 May 1943, Viceroy's letter to Secretary of State, 'From Jinnah's own point of view half the strength of his position is that he has refused to define Pakistan. . . .'
33. 10 June 1943, Viceroy's letter to Secretary of State, 'Your comments about Jinnah's attitude . . . I think he looks a little more alarming from London than he does here. I don't, however, think that he wants a row with the government. Though on the other hand he insists on being rude to the government as he thinks he dares. I doubt if anyone takes it very seriously, and his threats do not cause me any sleepless nights, as I have consistently felt and said both to Zetland and you. Jinnah would be quite as bad a master as Gandhiji and Congress, and he is never likely to be in the near future, since he represents a minority, and a minority that can effectively hold its own with our assistance. Nor, of course, is his organization as deep rooted as that of the Congress. I would expect him to be likely to continue to be not merely non-constructive, but positively destructive, and to play his hand so as to get maximum in the way of commitments favourable to his community and the maximum in the way of hurdles to be taken by the Hindus but without facing a showdown with the government.'[21]
34. On 4 October 1943, the Viceroy wrote, 'But I believe as I have often said . . . that the Muslims though they are bound to abuse us in the interest of keeping their place in the public eye, and so safeguarding their reputation as good nationalists, have nothing to gain from the disappearance of the British connection or from a further weakening of that connection, and do not want any such weakening.'
35. He quotes Lord Wavell on Jinnah, 'Jinnah's attitude was unfair and unacceptable. Jinnah's obdurateness was responsible for defeating the purpose of (Simla Conference).'

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36. On 10 August 1946, Wavell wrote to his private secretary, outlining the Pakistan scheme, as a solution to the problem, in view of Congress and League disagreements. He reportedly found the Muslim League reaction, through Feroze Khan Noon, to be positive.
37. Wali Khan discusses the Cabinet Mission Plan and says that since both Congress and Muslim League accepted the Plan, the British Plan of dividing India went up in smoke. He implies that the Muslim League's subsequent rejection of the Plan, Direct Action threat and consequent communal riots, were a part of the British Plan. He goes on to add, that following the League's rejection of the Plan, the British Government pressurised the Viceroy to hand over power to the Congress but Wavell wrote back, 'I wish a United India but they (Muslims) do not recognize Congress as representing all India.' However, owing to countrywide unrest, according to Wali Khan, Wavell called Nehru to form the interim government and wrote in his diary (page 326) 'I dislike intensely the idea of having an interim government dominated by one party, but I feel I must try to get the Congress in as soon as possible.'[22]

On the basis of selective quotations from the correspondence of British bureaucrats, Wali Khan has painted the following picture of the founder of Pakistan and of the Muslim League:

1. Jinnah flattered the British to the extent of assuring them that if his own Muslim brother, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, aligned himself with the Congress, he would remain aligned with the British.
2. Jinnah was upset by the fall of the Qayyum government in the Frontier because the latter was a government agent.
3. The Muslim League was a unique organization which shot down a proposal to transfer power. The British and the League were converging towards an understanding. On its part the League offered to promote British policy and the British responded by bringing all Muslims under the League banner.[23]

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4. The British proposed to use Islam against Russia.
5. Viceroy Linlithgow repeatedly said that he was tired of Jinnah's arguments.
6. The British and the Muslim League were on the same wavelength.[24]
7. The League was like a sand bag which the British were using as a buffer; the sand bag would take the brunt, leaving the British unscathed.
8. Linlithgow warned the League leaders that he would not tolerate negative politics.[25]
9. The British ignored 100 nationalist Muslims who met in Delhi under Khan Bahadur Allah Bux Soomro. The Viceroy's behaviour towards Khan Bahadur Soomro was offensive. At the same time he boosted up Jinnah, even though the Khan Bahadur held an elected position, and Jinnah held none.
10. The Khaksars, in all humility, offered 50,000 volunteers to help the British in the war but this was rejected due to Jinnah's negative attitude of not accepting responsibility for the Khaksars.
11. The British knew that if Jinnah did not toe their line they could 'fix' him through their agents, Sikandar and Fazlul Haq.
12. By demanding full partnership for the Muslim League, Jinnah ignored the Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and the *Harijans*.
13. Upto 1942 the British had no intention of leaving India. However, when suddenly in 1942, they came to the conclusion that they may have to leave India, they stopped insisting on a united India. Thus, 1942 marked a watershed. Before that they divided the communities to perpetuate their hold on India (for ever). After 1942, the British worked for partitioning India, even though the Pakistan Movement had not yet gained momentum. So the initiative for partition was taken by the British in pursuance of their own interests. In other words, divide and rule upto 1942, and divide and quit after 1942. This change in the goal came about under American pressure.
14. The Cripps Mission accepted the principle of partition, gave more importance to Jinnah and ignored the Congress.

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15. The Viceroy opposed Sikhistan because a) it would create problems between Muslims and Sikhs, b) it would hurt British interests, c) it would not hurt Congress interests, and d) Punjab was a recruiting ground for the British army, and there would be enmity between Muslims and Sikhs within the army.
16. By making the offer to Jinnah to form the national government in 1942, the Congress showed a great deal of understanding, while by rejecting the offer Jinnah displayed arrogance. 'All the deceit, cruelty, cunning, notoriety - all British attributes, were faithfully transcribed in the book of Muslim League. If they were really concerned with Islam and in the Muslim rights they would have never refused the offer to govern the whole of India.'[26] Wali Khan thinks Jinnah refused the offer because he wanted the British to rule for ever.
17. Jinnah was powerless; he represented a minority that could survive only on British support, therefore Jinnah was totally a British stooge. His political life hung by the thread of British patronage, to which he clung fast. He was the most potent British weapon against the Congress.

In analysing Wali Khan's assumptions, the reader ought to keep in mind:

a) That, Wali Khan is not a historian. His objective is to project his father and the *Khudai Khidmatgars*. Since he may have run short of positive material on the subject, he has chosen to downgrade those who opposed the Khan and his followers.
b) That Wali Khan has chosen the period of Indian history when the British had switched their patronage and favours from the Hindus, who had taken full advantage of their century-long patronage and dominated the Indian scene politically, economically and in all other fields. The British had realized that their earlier policy had suppressed the Muslims to the point of extinction. Wali Khan was fortunate not to have lived through the first phase of British imperialism when the Muslims suffered humiliation. He

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> also belonged to a province where the problem of communal disharmony never existed. Finally, the humiliation, deprivation, discrimination, intolerance, etc, suffered by the Muslims are not relevant to his book, which is devoted to a specific theme and a specific target, which he has tried to project to the best of his ability, as a committed politician and not as a neutral historian.

If the correspondence quoted by Wali Khan is read together, the conclusions would be different from those drawn by him. His inferences read together are incoherent, and self-contradictory. For example Jinnah is portrayed as pliable, difficult, alarming and impossible in the opinion of the same Viceroy at different times. He is also projected as unfair, unacceptable, obdurate, and seeking maximum commitment for the Muslims. Sometimes, he is used to beat the Congress. At other times, Sikandar and Fazlul Haq are used to beat him. Sometimes he has little support; at other times, he is formidable. Sometimes, he is a national leader; at others he is a man lesser in stature than a provincial chief minister, whose credentials as a spokesman of Sindhi Muslims were questionable.

Wali Khan had the benefit of hindsight in 1987 when he wrote his book *Facts are Facts*. The British did not need a certificate from Jinnah before recruiting the *Khaksars* in the army. When Jinnah did not offer 50,000 Muslim Leaguers to the British to fight the war, why should he have recommended the *Khaksars*? Was not Wali Khan aware that his father had dubbed the founder of the *Khaksars* as a British agent; that Gandhi had twice termed the *Khaksars* 'terrorists' in the meetings of the Congress high command on 18 March 1940?[27] It should be noted that Jinnah did not dub them as terrorists even though they had attempted to assassinate him. If they had been recruited in the army it was Gandhi who would have protested.

In any case, as reported by Wali Khan, Churchill had one million Indians volunteering to fight Hitler. His analysis of British opposition to Sikhistan is simplistic on all four counts. Sikhs could have negotiated a better deal in 1946-7 and saved Punjab from partition, but they were misled by the Congress, in much the same way as the Khan brothers were misled and by-passed by the Congress. How Sikhistan would have hurt

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British interests is not easy to comprehend. Sikhistan would have definitely hurt Congress interests (as Pakistan did), but Wali Khan does not think so. Partition did not result in infighting between non-Muslim and Muslim soldiers.

Wali Khan is surprised by Jinnah's rejection of Gandhi's offer to form a national government. His surprise reflects Gandhi's belief often repeated by Badshah Khan, that the communal problem having been created by the British would automatically vanish once the British disappeared from the scene. Badshah Khan believed in Gandhi through a spiritual communion. The offer was in fact made when Gandhi declared, 'I have come to the conclusion that the two communities will come together almost immediately after the British power finally comes to an end'.[28] The offer was made in the name of communal unity and Jinnah responded, 'I am glad that at least Gandhi has openly declared that unity can only come after the achievement of Indian independence and has thereby thrown off the cloak that he has worn for the last 22 years.'[29] He added, 'May I ask Mr. Gandhi to give up the game of fooling the Muslims by insinuating that we depend upon the British for the achievement of Pakistan. Hands off the Muslims!'[30] In February 1944, he ridiculed the suggestions made by 'some Hindu leaders' that he should be made the first Prime Minister of India, terming these as 'camouflage', made in order to deceive and confuse the Muslims.[31] After undermining the Cabinet Mission Plan in 1946, Gandhi made a similar offer to Mountbatten (1947) which was ridiculed by the latter. Whereupon Gandhi assured the Viceroy that his offer to Jinnah, was a serious one (meaning thereby that he spoke for the Congress). Accordingly, Mountbatten conveyed Gandhi's offer of Prime Ministership to Jinnah on 5 April 1947, at a time when the Viceroy found, 'My God, he (Jinnah) was cold. It took most of the interview to unfreeze him.' Jinnah called it a 'mischievous offer.' He called upon the Viceroy to take a quick decision in view of the 'horrors of the Muslim massacres.' When Gandhi told the Congress high command that he had made such an offer to Jinnah through the Viceroy, he was vehemently opposed and strongly advised to withdraw the verbal offer formally in writing.[32] The Congress high command, except for Azad, thought that Jinnah would jump at the offer and accept it without giving a second thought

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to its meaning and consequences. Under Congress compulsion, Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy that his 'plan' was not accepted by the Congress, and may be considered as withdrawn.[33] But Wali Khan still wonders why, if Jinnah really cared for Islam and the Muslims, did he reject the offer!

The correspondence between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State contributed to policy formulation and can not be considered as policy itself. Sometimes, the letters convey a certain message, while the policy outcome is quite the opposite. Nevertheless, in order to arrive at a correct picture of a situation, the author must maintain a sequence, and tell the whole story, instead of selecting bits from here and pieces from there, for a period that suits his motive, to justify his preconceived notions. Since he considers letters by the British rulers to be unbiased, authentic, accurate and reliable, let us refer to some letters which may have escaped Wali Khan's notice:

Viceroy Willingdon's assessment of Jinnah has been quoted at length by Wali Khan. If his assessment really had any merits, as Wali Khan believes, then Willingdon's opinion about Gandhi communicated to Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald also carries weight: 'He (Gandhi) is a curious little devil — always working for an advantage. In all his actions I see the *Banya* predominating over the Saint.'[34]

Wavell's assessment about Jinnah and Gandhi in mid-September 1943: 'It is hardly too much to say that Jinnah is Muslim League. He is a vain, shallow, and ambitious man who would probably think the present time inappropriate for any rapprochement with the Hindus.[35] Gandhi and Jinnah are both dictators. Gandhi because he has built himself up as a saint, and Jinnah because there is no body in his party who approaches him in ability.'[36]

In his maiden speech, Lord Wavell stressed the geographical unity of India as central to its postwar constitution. Later in March, Wavell gathered that 'Jinnah regards me as an enemy of the Muslim League and is determined to be as much of a nuisance as he can. He does not really represent solid steady Muslim opinion—in fact Jinnah himself is hardly a Muslim—but he can sway opinion, and no one seems to have the character to oppose him.'[37] Wavell was not ready to 'concede Pakistan' to such a man.'[38] 'He found it difficult to believe that Jinnah

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who, whatever his faults, is a highly intelligent man, is sincere about his Two-Nation Theory.'[39] 'Pakistan was so nebulous, unwieldy and impractical a proposal that the Viceroy had almost as much trouble as did Gandhi in taking Jinnah's advocacy seriously.' To take only one example, Wavell noted in a letter to Amery, 'the North Eastern Muslim State would amount very little without Calcutta but Calcutta is, in the main, a Hindu city.'[40] 'Jinnah,' it seemed, 'was arguing for something which he has not worked out.'[41]

In December 1944, Jinnah met with Wavell. The latter argued 'from a practical point of view' that the 'Unity of India' brought about by the British rule ought to be maintained, at least 'for security and economic purposes.'[42] By mid December 1944, Bengal's Governor Richard G Casey, concluded that Pakistan was more a matter of wishful thinking than a political reality. He hoped that 'Mr Jinnah will compromise before Pakistan becomes a tiger that he is riding.'[43] Wavell replied, 'Pakistan, or rather the communal suspicion represented by it is the main obstacle to constructive thinking. I do not believe that Pakistan would work. It creates new minority problems, quite as bad as we have now. The Pakistan state or states, would be economically unsound. On the other hand, like the emotional ideas that have not been properly thought out, it thrives on opposition. Some of the abler Muslims may regard it as a bargaining counter, but for the mass of the Muslim League it is a real possibility and has a very strong sentimental appeal.'[44] Wavell: 'Gandhi and Jinnah were behaving like very temperamental prima donnas, and the latter is publishing his telegrams in the Press before I even receive them. Gandhi at least had the courtesy to ask whether I agree to publication.'[45]

Azad lunched with Wavell after which Gandhi met Wavell. Thereafter, Jinnah arrived. The Viceroy found him 'much more direct than Gandhi who was rather vague and discursive, but whose manners are far worse.'[46] The Cabinet Mission, individually and jointly came fully briefed not to divide India. Pethick-Lawrence's brief said, 'The division of India will be born in bitter antagonism and it will certainly be rash to assume that this will not be reflected in the efforts necessary to regulate the machinery of communications and of economic intercourse between Pakistan States and the rest of India ... the splitting

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of India will be the reverse of beneficial so far as the livelihood of the people is concerned.'[47]

A separate book is needed to quote references to prove that the British favoured a united federal India before as well as after the Lahore Resolution. The theory of 'divide and rule' applied to both Hindus and Muslims, but Congress fell into the trap headlong otherwise it would have come to some agreement. No conclusion can be drawn from the correspondence. Gandhi did not become a devil and a *banya*, and Jinnah did not become a bully and dictator, just because the Viceroy said so. They were what they were, on their own merits. Likewise, India was partitioned because Congress failed to guarantee Muslim rights, and sabotaged negotiation.

Political debate, to be meaningful, must be objective. Wali Khan has quoted a personal remark by Lady Willingdon, wife of the Governor of Bombay, about Mrs Jinnah's dress which 'insulted' Jinnah, who not only left the dinner party of the Governor in 1918, but left India when Willingdon came back as Viceroy and stayed on in England for as long as Lord Willingdon remained the Viceroy of India. The fact is that it was Lord Willingdon, and not Jinnah, who may have entertained a grudge against the other. Jinnah had organized anti-Willingdon protests in Bombay in 1918—during the War, but that should not have prompted Viceroy Lord Willingdon to omit Jinnah's name from the First Round Table Conference. In the 1930s Jinnah had established himself as a pragmatic, conciliatory and a compromising leader. Had he harboured any grudge, he would have targeted Willingdon for confrontation. Wali Khan's assessment of Jinnah's negative attitude towards Willingdon is further belied by the following:

1. Before Willingdon left London for his assignment as Viceroy, Jinnah called on him. During the visit, he reiterated the Muslim position, briefed the new Viceroy on all the latest demands that he had added since he first drafted his 14-points.[48]
2. Jinnah visited India in August 1931, met many leaders, and called on Lord Willingdon in Simla. He never hesitated to pay several other visits to India — Bombay, Delhi and Simla.[49]

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3. On 14 January 1931, Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald told the Aga Khan, Jinnah and Sir Shafi that the British government was looking for distinguished Indians for appointment as Provincial Governors. Jinnah, sensing the intentions, at once made it clear that his services were not available for sale and firmly rejected the suggestion which he believed was nothing less than an attempt to bribe him.[50] If Jinnah was for sale as Wali Khan has attempted to portray, then he would have responded by saying that as long as Willingdon was the Viceroy, he would not accept the job.
4. Jinnah represented the Muslims in the Second Round Table Conference during the first year (1931) of Lord Willingdon's tenure as a Viceroy.
5. In 1933, the Muslim League, which had been badly split, resolved to unite if Jinnah presided over it. Jinnah returned to Bombay in 1934. When he attended the League Council, he was given an enthusiastic welcome. His strategy at this point was to turn back to Congress to see if its leadership was prepared to concede all that MacDonald's Communal Award had promised to the Muslims, thus clearing the way for the Hindus and Muslims to join forces. He told the Associated Press that Muslims were in no way behind any other community in their demand for national self government—the crux of the problem was that the safeguards should be embodied in the future constitution.[51]
6. In 1934, Jinnah was elected to the Central Assembly from Bombay. He took full part in the Assembly proceedings.
7. In 1935, Jinnah had a meeting with Congress President Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, leader of Hindu Mahasabha, who had also been Congress President, in his bid to sort out the communal problem—without success.
8. In April 1935 Jinnah left for a London, but in October 1935 he came back to India to reorganize the Muslim League.
9. He presided over the Muslim League Council in Bombay in April 1936 to transform a fragmented party into a mass movement. The resolution voiced emphatic protest

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against forcing the Government of India Act, 1935, upon the people of India. Jinnah advised all Indians to treat the federal scheme just as the Germans had reacted to the Treaty of Versailles. [52]

10. On 2 April 1936, Lord Willingdon was replaced by Lord Linlithgow. Jinnah had however been active in Indian politics since 1934.

Thus, it was obvious that Jinnah's policies and actions were not dictated by personal likes or dislikes as assumed by Wali Khan, but by perceptions of national interest. In fact, there was no personal antagonism between him and Willingdon. The anti-Willingdon protests organized in 1918 by Jinnah were not against a person but a representative of a colonial system.

An indepth scrutiny of the documentary evidence produced by Wali Khan does not prove that (a) India's partition was a British plan and (b) that the Muslim League and Jinnah were set up by the British as their tools to execute the plan. On the contrary, the British showed their disdain for Jinnah, and found him difficult to deal with. They also attempted to split the Muslim League to undermine the influence of Jinnah.

Wali Khan has credited Chaudhry Zafarullah Khan with the authorship of the Lahore Resolution of 1940 under the influence of Viceroy Lord Linlithgow. He promises to publish relevant evidence in due course.[53] Thus, one has to wait till new evidence is produced in the form of Sir Zafarullah Khan's notes, etc. Meanwhile, Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada has published a well-documented work in which he has reproduced the full text of the note in the Appendix.[54] This note was sent by Lord Linlithgow to the Secretary of State Zetland on 12 March 1940.[55] The note discusses and summarizes various options. It dismisses Chaudhry Rahmat Ali's scheme, as utterly impracticable. Linlithgow discusses two Muslim federations and expresses scepticism about their practicability. He argues that devotion to the principle of all-India unity may in the end prove to be too strong an emotion, overriding wisdom and foresight and that the separation scheme may have to be abandoned, in favour of an all-India federation. Zafarullah did not give his own scheme but merely analysed the different proposals already doing the rounds. In fact he opposed partition. Zafarullah's

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note was neither the basis of the Lahore Resolution, nor did he have any hand in the drafting of the resolution. Pirzada concludes that perhaps the note was forwarded by the Viceroy to dissuade Jinnah from demanding the division of India. His conclusion is well-founded because Jinnah's acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan was a last attempt to keep India united. As observed by Azad, partition was thrust by Congress on Jinnah, who, he was convinced, was using the Lahore Resolution only as a bargaining chip.

The Lahore Resolution was not the brainchild of any single person, nor was it instigated by a foreign power. It marked the culmination of the struggle of the Indian Muslims to achieve a place of dignity and honour, sanctified by constitutional guarantees in a free India. Jinnah had dismissed earlier proposals presented by Muslim visionaries like Chaudhry Rahmat Ali and others. Those schemes were either grandiose, too idealistic or premature. The Muslims had till then not acquired negotiating strength. The parting of the ways in 1937 and the Congress mass contact campaign provided an impetus to strengthen the League platform. The resolution of the Sindh Muslim League (1939), demanding a separate homeland for the Muslims, led to the appointment of a Committee to examine the political and economic aspects of the homeland idea.

Having established the credentials of the Muslim League as a mass movement, Jinnah acquired the status of the sole legitimate spokesman of the Indian Muslims. He could then negotiate with his adversaries—the British and the Congress—from a position of strength. This negotiating strategy was made public through the Lahore Resolution, which was the beginning of a meaningful dialogue, and a new phase characterised by a two-pronged confrontation. This strategy yielded encouraging results in the 1945-6 elections. The offer of the Cabinet Mission Plan, conceding zonal autonomy and grouping was made in recognition of the League's representative character. Thus, Jinnah, by accepting the Mission Plan was able to extract the maximum possible concessions for the Indian Muslims. But much to India's misfortune, and Jinnah's deep disappointment, the Mission Plan was undermined by the Congress by devious means, leading ultimately to the partition of India.

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During this crucial phase, Jinnah had a great deal of contact with Bacha Khan, because of the latter's special position in the Frontier. Bacha Khan posed a formidable challenge. Jinnah made more than reasonable offers to Bacha Khan to win him over, as confided by Bacha Khan in 1965 to Pyarelal, in Kabul. But Bacha Khan turned down Jinnah's offers, because he was misled by Gandhi's assurances given on 3 June 1946 to the effect that India would mount an attack on Pakistan to liberate Pakhtunistan and restore his spiritual association with the Indian National Congress. Accordingly, Mr. Jinnah had no option but to abandon efforts for compromise with Bacha Khan and make a direct approach to the Pathan masses.

Jinnah's stature as an Indian nationalist leader upto 1946 is indisputable, despite the claims of his critics to the contrary. He had the 'uncanny combination of prescience, resolution and strength of character, placing him above world class statesmen like Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Churchill, Curzon, Mussolini and Mahatma Gandhi . . . the British Cabinet Mission (1946) made what turned out to be Britain's final proposal for a unified India. It was ingenious and . . . constructive. Now Jinnah saw his chance and took it resolutely and unerringly. He announced his unconditional acceptance of the British scheme. In that one decision, combining as it did, sagacity, shrewdness and unequal political flair, he justified my claim that he was the most remarkable of all the great statesmen that I have known. It put him on a level with Bismarck. At this critical juncture, when Jinnah stood rock-like, the Congress leaders wavered. With incredible folly they rejected the British proposals; or rather they put forward dubious and equivocal alternative suggestions, which so watered the scheme down that it would have lost its meaning and effectiveness.'[56]

Jinnah's battle was constitutional. It spanned over four and a half decades. His integrity was beyond question. He could be cold and calculating, frank and forthright in political negotiations. He was steadfast and unbending. He changed his strategy and tactics, but his goal was the same—constitutional safeguards for Indian Muslims. What he achieved was not the ideal he fought for, because his political adversaries were more powerful, and he achieved what was possible at a stage when

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confrontation had reached a point of no return. His achievements and failures are before the world. He has been showered with praises. He has been criticised. That is history. His successors did not come up to his expectations. He could not train the Muslims for a political battle on the same line as the Congress did, because most of his political career was spent in the Congress. He had no time and it was not easy to train the Muslims to run a multi-ethnic federation. But that did not justify the postponement of his struggle. India headed for independence after World War II. All parties were in a hurry. So was Jinnah.

The Islamic ring round Russia from Turkey to China could not be completed, as Wali Khan claims, without partitioning India and creating a Muslim state. This theory would merit consideration if the world could be made to believe that India's partition was a British conspiracy. This premise, however, has not been established by Wali Khan. Partition was necessitated by the Indians. But let the 'Islamic ring' theory be considered on its own merits. The theory is based on many hypothetical assumptions:-

a. If the Islamic ring was sought to be ideological, then the ring round Russia already existed in the shape of six Muslim republics within the Soviet Union, from the Chinese border upto Europe. But this inner ring was ineffective, as was the middle ring comprising Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the outer ring stretching from Morocco to Indonesia. The Islamic nations lost their initiative more than five hundred years ago. They were by-passed by the scientific, technological, industrial and economic revolutions. They lagged far behind in political evolution. They were subjugated politically and economically. Even after independence, they could not catch up in decades what they lost in centuries. The British were not such poor students of history as to rely on the so-called Islamic ring round the Russian neck. They could not be credited with such an absurd belief that Pakistan, in collaboration with its Muslim neighbours, could pose a challenge to Russia. Jinnah had certainly no such illusions. By projecting this theory, Wali Khan has ridiculed Islam, slighted the freedom struggle of the Indian Muslims

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and insulted the British sense of history. The British had an adversarial relationship with Russia, but in the twentieth century, they could not rely on the medieval approach of creating a Muslim satellite in South Asia to play the British game after they packed up and left India. On the other hand, British pragmatism could be judged from the fact that their prime minister was the first Western leader to visit Moscow, as soon as the Russians denounced communism of their own free will, and to offer emergency aid.

b. The theory also assumes that the Soviet system itself was invincible, which is a fallacy. The Soviet Union was a military super power, but as a socio-economic system, it was doomed to collapse under its own weight. Communism's biggest enemy was communism itself.

c. A parallel may be drawn between the Russian empire and the British Indian empire in dealing with their Muslim territories. The areas comprising Pakistan were gradually annexed by the British in a similar manner in which Czarist Russia annexed the Central Asian Muslim regions. Following the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, the Soviet Union came into existence and it incorporated the six Muslim republics under a highly centralised communist hegemony. In India, sooner or later the colonial power was to pack up and go and the Indians had to mutually agree on the modalities of the transfer of power. The Muslims offered the Lucknow Pact (1918), Jinnah's fourteen points (1929) and the Lahore Resolution (1940). Finally the British offered Zonal Federation (1946). The Congress favoured a strong central hegemony, much like Moscow's hegemony. The Central Asian Muslim republics had no choice because the colonial power itself became the central authority. In India the colonial power was the referee whose responsibility it was to prevent the Hindu majority from imposing its will on the Muslim minority.

d. Paradoxical though it may seem, history has very few parallels, whereby, a cult, a creed, a philosophy and a system has been destroyed by its own authors and its own devotees. One is the creed of communism and the other is *ahimsa*. Both rose to international prominence, both

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> captured world attention, communism more than *ahimsa*. One conquered territories by force, the other conquered territories though persuasion. Communism rose like a meteor in 1917, thrived on human bondage and was ended in 1991 by its own leadership. The *ahimsa* of Gandhi's brand was born in 1920, embraced by Bacha Khan in 1929 and abandoned by both when India won freedom.

Finally Wali Khan's thesis that 1942 was a watershed: 'Before 1942, the British had no intention to leave. So they divided and ruled. In 1942, they buckled under American pressure, and suddenly decided to leave. So they wanted to divide and quit. Hence the partition.' Elsewhere, he has said that the British were unnerved by the Japanese. But if they were not, and the real pressure was from the USA, that should indeed have been an encouraging and positive factor. In such a case, the Congress needed no Quit-India Resolution, and no bloodshed, no defections in the army, and no support by Gandhi to Subhas Chandra Bose. And why would Prime Minister Attlee instruct the Cabinet Mission to propose a United India in 1946? And why would Mountbatten tell his governors, even as late as April 1947 'he was not going to lightly abandon hope for a united India. He wanted the world to know that the British had made every effort positive to keep India united. If Britain failed it was of utmost importance that the world know it was Indian opinion rather than a British decision that had made partition a choice.'[57] Mountbatten's personal anguish at the prospect of going down in history as the man who had divided India is expressed in a document flying back to London with Ismay, 'Partition,' Mountbatten wrote 'is sheer madness, and no one would ever induce or agree to it were it not for this communal madness that has seized everybody and leaves no other course open—the responsibility for this mean decision must be placed on Indian shoulders in the eyes of the world, for one day, they will bitterly regret the decision they are about to make.'[58]

NOTES

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8

Badshah Khan and Abul Kalam Azad

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad came into prominence as a powerful writer, preaching pan-Islamism, in his paper *Al-Hilal*, published from Calcutta in 1912. He opposed Sir Syed's Aligarh Movement on the basis that it was confined to India.[1] Unlike Sir Syed, he used Persian and Arabic words and phrases extensively in his writings which confined his message to Muslims only, who were well-versed in these languages. As a result he made Urdu purely a Muslim language, and consequently, non-Muslims began to oppose Urdu.[2]

This great Muslim intellectual subsequently joined active politics, became an Indian nationalist, and joined the Indian National Congress, which was then led by senior leaders like Pandit Motilal Nehru, and Mahatma Gandhi. His political insight and qualities of articulation were soon recognized. He rose to the Congress high command, and became its President for a long period of six years, (1939-46) which was also a crucial period in the history of Indian independence.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War, differences arose within the Congress high command as to whether the Congress should support or oppose the British war effort. By this time, Maulana Azad had been elected Congress President in 1939. He occupied that exalted position throughout this momentous period, including the post-war phase of delicate negotiations, i.e. in 1945 and 1946, which led to the freedom of India. Azad gives a graphic account of the discussions within the Congress high command on crucial issues. Gandhi wanted the British to discard weapons and use spiritual force to win the war. Azad advocated support for the democracies against

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Fascism and Nazism, provided India's own freedom was guaranteed. Gandhi wanted to commit suicide rather than see the devastation caused by the War. Azad proposed conditional participation in the British war effort. In the earlier stages Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Nehru, Patel and Rajaji supported Azad's view. But soon, within a month, they changed their position. 'Even Abdul Ghaffar Khan who had earlier supported me, now followed Gandhi. They wrote letters of resignation from the Working Committee.'[3] This happened in the Working Committee meeting held in Delhi on 3 July 1940.

In the earlier stages of the war, the USA had suggested to the British to come to terms with India. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbour, the United States fully entered the War. President Roosevelt then applied greater pressure, and consequently, some change in British policy could be discerned. In December 1941, Azad and Nehru were released. Azad met Gandhi and found that his assessment was that since the British were under tremendous pressure, they would be willing to accept India's freedom as a price for Congress co-operation. Azad's own assessment was that the British were too preoccupied to make such an outright commitment. The Working Committee met in Bombay on 15 September 1941. Gandhi pressed his non-violent approach towards the British. Azad advocated that freedom of India must be made a pre-condition and his view prevailed in the resolution. Gandhi resumed the leadership and, consequently, Abdul Ghaffar Khan withdrew his resignation. On 26 January 1941, Babu Subhash Chandra Bose disappeared. His subsequent activities convinced many Indians that Japan was working for Indian freedom and Asian solidarity. Gandhi's outlook also changed. This change of outlook influenced his response to the mission of Sir Stafford Cripps, 'who was upset that an apostle of non-violence like Gandhi spoke in glowing terms about Bose,' a supporter of fascism and a practitioner of violence! Abdul Ghaffar Khan's reaction to this sudden change of attitude in India and its influence on the minds of non-violent leadership has not been recorded by his biographer, presumably because he never took a position contrary to that of Gandhi. Similar was the case when the Quit-India Resolution was moved in July 1942. The non-violent group including Abdul Ghaffar Khan and led by Gandhi, felt that since the War was

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on the Indian frontier, Quit-India Movement would unnerve the British to come to terms with the Congress. Azad believed that the Japanese could not be trusted to stop their march into India when they saw the British withdraw, and that the latter may even provide an opportunity for the Japanese to occupy India. He counselled the Congress that at that critical moment the British would not tolerate any mass movement. He warned that in an environment of provocation, the mass movement would become violent. The disagreement between him and Gandhi reached a deadlock. Gandhi wrote to Azad on 7 July 1942, that they could not work together. Nehru and Patel persuaded him to withdraw the letter and the Quit-India Resolution was passed on 14 July 1942.[4] Azad knew that the Quit-India Movement would be counter-productive. In his judgement, the Congress leaders, particularly the non-violent band including Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Kirpalani, and others, did not have any clear idea about the War. They were accustomed to toeing Gandhi's line. He found it useless to discuss the issue with them. But he had to submit to Gandhi, knowing that he was adamant and unbending. 'I may confess that many people thought that Gandhiji would bring freedom for India by some magic or super-human method. I had little doubt that the government would refuse to negotiate under duress. . . . I feel unhappy about the whole situation. . . . I was not hopeful about the outcome. . . . Viceroy made it clear that government would not tolerate any rebellion during the War, whether violent or non-violent. He was not prepared to meet. . . . Next day all leaders were arrested and taken by train. . . . Gandhiji was depressed by the unexpected arrests. He had placed great faith in his own judgement. Now his calculations had proved wrong. He was uncertain as to what he should do.'[5]

Azad has more to say about this non-violent group of Gandhi's followers. They, including Badshah Khan, had resigned at the Delhi Working Committee (1939) over the issue whether to support the War effort, on the basis of *ahimsa* being their faith and creed,

> even more important than Indian independence. When, however, India became free in 1947, not one of them said that Indian army should be abandoned. On the contrary they insisted that the army

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> should be partitioned and brought under immediate control of India. This was contrary to the proposal of the Commander-in-Chief who had suggested that for three years there should be joint army and a joint command, but these erstwhile champions of non-violence would not agree. If non-violence was really their creed, how was it possible for them to take responsibility in a government, which spent over a hundred crore a year on the army? . . . Some of them wanted to increase the expenditure on the armed forces. I have always had the feeling that their (non-violent) colleagues and friends did not exercise their own minds on most crucial issues. They were out and out followers of Gandhiji. Whenever a question arose, they waited to see how he would react. . . . I could not for a moment accept the position that we should follow him blindly.[6]

After the release from jail in 1944, the Congress was in a state of confusion, as to their policy towards the War. In 1940 they had rejected co-operation. In 1942, they had shown inclination towards Japan and began the Quit-India Movement to facilitate Japanese occupation of India. In 1944, when the Allies 'Victory' was in sight, Gandhi and his non-violent group were left with no option but to offer an olive branch to the British. But the British did not need Congress support any more and they ignored the offer. During the six years of the War, the Congress had exposed itself—its structural fragility, its emotional approach to cold international issues, its blind faith in the spiritual powers of one man, its opportunism in hitting the British at a critical moment and supporting the fascist powers, and a lack of sense of direction and sense of timing.

The British Conservative Party lost in the elections and the post-War negotiations for India's freedom were entirely handled by the Labour Party which had strong links with the Congress Party—a fact well known to all. Following the end of the War, general elections were held in India and the Congress won in all Hindu majority provinces and only one Muslim majority province, namely, NWFP. In Bengal, the Muslim League was in a comfortable position. In Punjab and Sindh, Congress could not win any Muslim seats. Maulana Azad claims that he initiated a dialogue for forming coalitions with the Muslim League in the provinces but Jinnah opposed it. He recalls that in 1937, when the Muslim League was in a weaker position, it had proposed coalitions in the provinces to create an atmosphere

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conductive to communal unity. But the Congress had rejected this offer on the basis that the Muslim League did not represent Muslims. In 1945, the situation was different. If the League did not win absolute majorities in Sindh and the Punjab, the Congress did not win any Muslim seats either, thereby proving that the Congress had lost Muslim support in Muslim majority provinces, except the NWFP. The Muslim League strategy was to win over non-League Muslim groups and individuals. The Congress counter-strategy was to encourage those groups in forming non-League ministries. It succeeded in winning over the Unionists in the Punjab and a non-League group in Sindh. In its attempt to beat the League in Punjab and Sindh, the Congress had fallen into a trap. By setting up Muslims against Muslims—none of whom owed allegiance to Congress—it reaped no benefit for itself but dug the political graves for the non-League Muslim groups. The Muslim masses turned against them and defeated them in the next elections in 1946. The Congress strategy thus proved to be counter-productive; it had been opposed by Nehru, who was in favour of the Congress coming to terms with the Muslim League, in the Punjab, because the League had mass support.[7]

The Indian political scene had undergone a radical change and the situation in 1946 was markedly different from what it was in 1937. This change had become apparent to the liberal elements within the Congress leadership. However, the perceptions of the Khan brothers had remained unaffected. They refused to believe that the Muslim League had become a mass organisation. They still believed that the inroads made by the League in the Frontier were British sponsored, in keeping with their policy of divide-and-rule. The mere existence of a Congress ministry, headed by Dr Khan Saheb, had blinded them to the fact that, both at the grass-root and the leadership levels, the situation was fast changing. In the rest of India, Congress leaders recognized this change and began to adopt a more conciliatory attitude. Some of them, like Rajagopalachari, even advocated concessions. The Pathan component of the Congress, however, remained adamant till the very end.

Attlee, the Labour Prime Minister, in his address to the House of Commons on 15 March 1946 proposed a new approach to the Indian problem in the light of new realities. He made a

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frank admission that in spite of their internal differences and divisions, all Indians were united in their demand for freedom, whether they were Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Marathas, politicians, or civil servants. He also admitted that the feeling of nationalism was continuously growing stronger and permeated even the soldiers who had rendered splendid service in the war. He concluded that the Cabinet Mission was going to India with a positive attitude and with a resolve to succeed. Attlee presided over a government whose functionaries corresponded from time to time to help formulate British policy. Some of this correspondence between Attlee's subordinates had been quoted by Wali Khan in an attempt to prove that Jinnah and the Muslim League were British agents, trying to aggravate the communal problem and were thwarting nationalism, and independence. Wali Khan chooses to ignore the conclusion of the Prime Minister, based on that very correspondence, which said that the Muslims, including civil servants and fighting men, were nationalists. He has also chosen not to quote correspondence which calls Jinnah anti-British, a nationalist, and more Indian than the Congress. If he did so through oversight, then he must make amends. If he did so by choice, to project his father, then he has done a disservice to his illustrious father Badshah Khan, whose stature does not need the support of Wali Khan's thesis. On the other hand, the rest of the Congress leadership had been awakened to the nationalist credentials of Jinnah and the Muslim League. Azad, the Congress President, grasped the reality of Attlee's statement. The Simla conference had convinced him that the political question had reached a stage of settlement. Azad has claimed without any fear of contradiction that 'as a community the Muslims were extremely anxious about their future. It is true that they were in clear majority in certain provinces. At the provincial level they had no fears in these areas. They were, however, in a minority in India as a whole and were troubled by the fear that their position and status in independent India would not be secured.'[8]

Azad, as Congress President, looked at the Indian problem from a vantage point. He became a strong advocate of accommodating the Muslim point of view before putting up a combined front for India's freedom. As against this, the view

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taken by Badshah Khan (and elaborated by Wali Khan) was that the Muslims should settle these matters with the Hindus only after throwing the British out. By what method, he did not prescribe. He tended to view the problem more as a Pakhtun and less as an Indian. However, irrespective of the views held by the Khans, Azad had formulated a concrete plan, in his capacity as Congress President, which was that the constitution should be federal; that the centre should be weak with only defence, foreign affairs and communications to deal with; that the provinces should be completely autonomous with control on all other subjects; and that there should be a third list of subjects, which only the provincial legislatures should decide whether to retain or delegate to the centre. Thus Muslim provinces would be fully autonomous, except in the three subjects specified.[9]

Azad submitted these proposals in a letter addressed to Gandhi in 1945. Gandhi responding immediately instructed Azad to suppress the contents of his letter containing the proposals, and to let the matter be handled by the Working Committee.[10] The Working Committee's reaction to the proposals of its President was also suppressed. Perhaps Gandhi did not permit the Committee to debate the proposals. But Azad's letter and Gandhi's instructions were forwarded by Evan Jenkins to Abell on 25 and 28 August 1945 respectively. Azad deliberately omitted publication of these letters in order to maintain Congress discipline. He has not even mentioned the fact in his book *India Wins Freedom*.[11]

Azad claims that the Cabinet Mission Plan revealed on 16 May 1946, was basically his own plan, with the addition that the provinces were grouped in three zones, A, B and C, section B (Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and British Balochistan), section C (Bengal and Assam) and section A (the remaining provinces). The intention was to give complete assurance to the Muslim minorities and satisfy the 'legitimate fears' of the League. The Mission opposed the partition of India. The Mission plan of zonal federation was accepted by the Muslim League Council under Jinnah's advice, who told them that he could not extract better terms. The Congress also accepted the plan. Azad records with great passion and deep satisfaction that 'the acceptance by both Congress and Muslim League was a glorious chapter

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in the Indian history. It meant that the hurdles in way of freedom were settled through negotiation and not by violence and conflict. We were jubilant.'[12]

This great moment in the history of India, and the glowing tributes paid by the Congress President to Jinnah and Muslim League, have been distorted by some authors. In *Facts are Facts* Wali Khan has dismissed Azad's authoritative version and questioned its authenticity by alleging that the Muslim League accepted the Plan because it was convinced that the Congress would reject it. 'But Muslim League was upset when Congress approved the Plan on 25 June 1946.' The author attempts to show that Jinnah was receiving directions from the British government, whether to accept or reject the British Plan. He quotes Wavell's diary (of 25 June 1946 p. 303): 'The worst day yet. Congress has accepted . . . Cripps having assured me categorically that Congress would never accept the proposals. Congress manoeuvres have now put us in a difficult position. Both with Jinnah and the formation of interim government . . . unless we decide that Congress is dishonest, as it is in fact, and refuse to regard it as acceptance.'[13] This diary gives quite the opposite impression, that the Congress acceptance was dishonest, (as indeed it was) as proved by later events, taking place immediately after Azad's tenure as Congress President came to an end. Wali Khan assumes, without any basis that Wavell was upset at the Muslim League dropping its demand for Pakistan. When Jinnah was not upset why should Wavell be disappointed by the acceptance of the British Plan by Jinnah? He then quotes from Hodsons *Great Divide* (p. 151, Wavell's impressions), 'we then discussed Congress letter of acceptance, which is really a dishonest acceptance, but it is so cleverly worded that it had to be regarded as an acceptance.' Thus, the author after establishing Congress dishonesty, turns round, and says, 'the moment [the] British tightened the reins, Muslim League slowed to a docile trot to the extent of abandoning Pakistan.'[14] For the benefit of the readers let us summarise Wali Khan's assertions:

a) The Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Plan, believing that the Congress would reject it.
b) The Muslim League was upset when Congress accepted the Plan.

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c) Wavell was upset by Congress acceptance.
d) The Muslim League dropped the demand for Pakistan under British pressure.

What Wali Khan exactly wishes to convey is not clear, but it is reproduced to enable readers to form their own judgement.

Wali Khan then gives a brief account of the quarrels between the Congress and the League over the details of the Plan, and the Congress suggesting certain additions, etc., as a consequence of which the 'Muslim League withdrew its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan on 27 July, 1946.'[15] The acceptance and rejection of the British Plan by the major political forces of India was a serious issue and should be discussed as such. The author of *Facts are Facts* has taken pains to project his point of view. Let us consult other sources, equally, or perhaps, more committed to the Congress and to the unity of India.

After the Congress acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan, Azad felt that continuity in the Congress Presidentship was essential at that delicate stage of political negotiations, but he found that Sardar Patel and his friends wanted Patel to replace him.

> I proposed that Nehru should succeed me, because I was anxious that my successor should be the one who agreed with my point of view and carry out the same policy . .,. but the way things have shaped since then has made me realise that this was perhaps the greatest blunder of my political life. I have regretted no action of mine so much as the decision to withdraw from the Presidentship at this critical juncture. It was a mistake which . . . was of Himalayan dimension. My second mistake was . . . not to support Sardar Patel . . . if he had succeeded me as President he would have seen that the Cabinet Mission Plan was successfully implemented. He would never have committed the mistake of Nehru which gave Jinnah the opportunity of sabotaging the Plan. I can never forgive myself when I think that if I had not committed these mistakes, perhaps the history of the last ten years would have been different. Now happened one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history. On 10 July 1946, Nehru held a press conference in Bombay in which he made an astonishing statement that . . . Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly, completely unfettered by agreements, and free to meet all situations as they arise. . . . Replying to questions, Nehru added emphatically that Congress had agreed only to participate in the Constituent Assembly

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and regarded itself free to change or modify the Cabinet Mission Plan, as it thought best.[16]

Ignoring the well-argued and authentic revelations by the Congress insider and chief negotiator, Maulana Azad, on Nehru's subversion of the Cabinet Mission Plan, Wali Khan has instead chosen to compliment Nehru for his calculated blunder which divided India. He has also ignored the fact that Congress became adamant in interpreting the Plan to suit its convenience, that it refused to accept the interpretation given by the Mission members, by the British Government, or by arbitrators.

The Muslim League Council met in Delhi, and reacted to the Congress President's open and unprovoked repudiation of the tripartite agreement (British, Congress and Muslim League) in the following words:

'The Muslim League Council had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan in Delhi as it was assured that the Congress also had accepted the scheme and the Plan would be the basis of future constitution of India. Now that the Congress President had declared that the Congress could change the scheme through its majority in the Constituent Assembly, this would mean that the minorities would be placed at the mercy of the majority.' The Muslim League felt that Nehru's declaration meant that Congress had rejected the Plan and as such the Viceroy should call upon the League, which had accepted the Plan, to form the government.

Since no clarification or denial of Nehru's repudiation was issued, nor did the Viceroy give any undertaking that he would persuade the Congress to repudiate Nehru's declaration, the Muslim League felt that it was cheated and betrayed by its adversary—an adversary which had finally been pinned down to an agreement, after protracted serious negotiations under the highest level and neutral supervision of a third party, responsible for the implementation of the agreed settlement. This breach of faith exposed a total lack of credibility in the Congress as a negotiating party, and therefore it shook the very foundations of the negotiations. And if this was the attitude of the Congress at the beginning of the process, while the British were still present as a referee, who would guarantee the fairness

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of its future intentions, once the British had left India? This irresponsible behaviour of the Congress, in a matter crucial to the future of India, enraged the Muslims and brought them close to a breaking point. What were the options available to the Muslim League? To appeal to the Congress? To appeal to the British? Those who thought that the Muslim League acted on British instructions were disappointed. The League adopted the only available option, namely, to reject the Mission Plan in toto and to accept the Congress challenge in a language they would understand. Accordingly, the Muslim League Council met in Bombay on 27 July 1946, after waiting in vain for the Congress to revoke Nehru's declaration. It debated the matter for three days and resolved to reject the Plan and resort to Direct Action to register their protest. This resolution represented a firm and irreversible farewell to the unreliable negotiators of the Congress.

Badshah Khan surprisingly was happy at the breakdown of negotiations only because the Frontier had been saved from the much dreaded grouping. In a moment of supreme confidence he said, 'In United India, the number of Muslims was ten crores, and I think such a large number could not be suppressed easily. I was of the view that no power could destroy us, and, if anyone tried to enslave us, then we would secede from the federation. . . . If the Congress was not prepared to agree to these conditions (economic justice to deprived Muslims) then in the Muslim majority provinces we would go out of the federation.'[17] He had not agreed to a zonal federation or a confederation, provided by the Cabinet Mission Plan, on the plea that the Frontier would not be able to secede from the confederation, even though, the Plan provided for secession. He did not however elaborate how the Frontier could secede from the Indian federation. Perhaps, he had civil war in mind. But unlike Badshah Khan, Maulana Azad was deeply perturbed to see the unity of India being destroyed by 'our own action'. The Congress Working Committee met on 8 August. It failed to disown Nehru's declaration, because it wanted to 'save the prestige of the Congress President' (at the cost of India's unity) and merely reaffirmed the earlier decision of the AICC. This did not satisfy the Muslim League, which was by now convinced that Nehru's declaration, represented the inner thinking of the

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Congress. This was also revealed in the subsequent attitudes adopted by Patel and Nehru which forced partition upon India, as recorded by Azad.

From then on, the communal situation began to deteriorate. The Muslim League rejected the offer of an interim government. It declared 16 August as Direct Action Day. Demonstrations took place in Calcutta. Communal riots followed. Many authors have commented on the events. Some have blamed the Hindus. Others, including Wali Khan, have blamed the Muslim League. To quote Maulana Azad again:

> The turn that events had taken made it almost impossible to expect a peaceful solution by agreement between [the] Congress and [the] Muslim League. This was one of the greatest tragedies of Indian history and I have to say with the deepest regret that a large part of the responsibility of this development rests with Jawaharlal.

Thus Azad has openly accused Nehru of making a peaceful solution impossible. In other words, the violent course of events, namely, the riots, bloodshed and revenge against the Muslims, was an extension of Nehru's negativism. Azad goes on to say,

> Nehru is one of my dearest friends and his contribution to India's national life is second to none. I have nevertheless to say with regret that this was the first time that he did immense harm to the national cause. He had committed an almost equal blunder in 1937 when the first elections were held under the Government of India Act of 1935. In these elections [the] Muslim League had suffered a great set back throughout the country except in Bombay and UP . . . : Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan were the Muslim League leaders in UP. They assured me that they will not only co-operate with the Congress, but would fully support the Congress programme. (In another chapter the Muslims' policy of full co-operation with the Congress to pave the way for communal settlement has been fully described). . . . I therefore held out the hopes that Muslim League would be taken into the government. They signed [a] document to that effect. After some days I found that Nehru had offered them only one ministry. They regretted and did not accept. This was a most unfortunate development. If the League offer of cooperation was accepted, the Muslim League, in all probability, would have merged with the Congress. Nehru's action gave the Muslim League a new lease of life. All students of

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politics know that it was from UP that the Muslim League was reorganized. Jinnah took full advantage of the situation and started the offensive which ultimately led to Pakistan.[18]

Azad then comes back to Nehru's obduracy in 1946:

I tried to persuade Nehru to modify his stand. I told him that he had made a great mistake. . . . I also warned him that the result of his action would . . . create new difficulties in the way of Indian freedom. Jawaharlal did not agree. . . . I sought Gandhiji's advice. He agreed with me and said he would advise Jawaharlal . . . but later Gandhiji also changed when Jawaharlal put the matter in a different light. The mistake of 1937 was bad enough, that of 1946 proved even more costly.[19]

Azad's version is corroborated by other authentic sources, both Indian and foreign. In a public statement, followed by a private message through B G Ker, shortly after the 1937 elections, Jinnah appealed to Gandhi to tackle the communal problem through power sharing. The latter replied, 'I wish I could do something but I am utterly helpless. My faith in unity is bright as ever, only I see no daylight, but impenetrable darkness and in such distress I cry out to God for light.' In answer to a later query from Jinnah whether Gandhi had seen the light, Gandhi regretted that he had not.[20] Pyarelal, Gandhi's secretary and biographer calls this a tactical error of the first magnitude.[21] Jinnah's efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity, through a public appeal and private approach were thus rebuffed by Gandhi, on the plea that God denied him the light necessary to solve the problem. 'Jinnah was right when he accused the Congress of dishonesty over the Cabinet Mission Plan, and he was right too in accusing Pethick-Lawrence and Cripps of collusion with Congress.'[22] Once the Mission said that they had intended compulsory grouping, the Congress should have either rejected the award or accepted compulsory grouping,[23] instead of using under-hand means to intimidate the concerned parties.

The Congress was playing a game of duplicity with the Mission Plan. While the Congress Working Committee openly accepted the Plan, Gandhi rejected it outright. Before Nehru made his speech of 10 July 1946, in Bombay, Gandhi had already rejected both the short-term provision (formation of an interim

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government) and the long-term provision (parity and grouping).[24] On 19 June 1946, the Congress Working Committee accepted the proposals for an interim government. But the hopes for the formation of a government were dashed by Gandhi who 'insisted that nationalist (Congress) Muslim(s) must be included.'[25] To sabotage the unity of India over this issue was a disservice. In 1946, the Muslim League had acquired complete hold over Muslim masses. In 1945, Congress secured 91.3% non-Muslim vote, while Muslim League secured 86.6% Muslim vote. Muslim League dominated the Muslims as completely as Congress dominated the Hindus. These results should have opened the eyes of Congress leaders, who would not believe that Jinnah had acquired complete hold over the Muslim masses.'[26]

Gandhi had the following to say in *Harijan* dated 17 May 1946, in justification of his undermining of the Cabinet Mission Plan:

> There is no take-it-or-leave-it business about the Mission's recommendations. If there were restrictions (like parity, grouping, etc.) the Constituent Assembly would not be a sovereign body free to frame the constitution of Independence of India. . . . Similarly about grouping. The provinces were free to reject the very idea of grouping. No province could be forced against its will to belong to a group even if the idea of grouping is accepted.[27]

Echoing Gandhi, Nehru informed the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy on 10 June 1946, that since Congress stood for a strong centre, it would break the grouping offered by the Mission Plan. Disregarding Jinnah's representative status and his mass support established by the elections, he said, 'The Congress did not think that Jinnah had any real place in the country. The Muslim League and the Congress represented entirely different outlooks on the work of constitution-making body and they were bound to have strong differences in the Interim Government.'[28] Nehru said all this in the presence of Azad who was the President of the Congress, and who had secured the Working Committee's approval of the Plan, which Nehru had the audacity to subvert in his presence.[29] Azad did not criticise Nehru publicly then or even later in his book, for

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subverting the Working Committee's approval before the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy. He has only confined his condemnation of Nehru on the basis of the latter's public statement in Bombay on 10 June 1946.

The sordid drama of the Cabinet Mission ended the way it began—with Congress playing the bully. The Mission was sent to India in response to Wavell's warnings that the Congress threats of Direct Action should be taken seriously. Why was the Direct Action threat being resorted to? This was because the Muslim League had just acquired an unprecedented clout after the 1945 elections to the tune of about 90% Muslim vote. Some counter measures were therefore considered imperative. The Mission came with the authority to make proposals for an agreement within a united India. It had no authority to make an award if the parties failed to reach an agreement. Had the Mission received a mandate to make an award, their members would have been restrained from making excessive contacts with the Congress to the exclusion of the Muslim League. Also, an award would have been framed with greater precision. Furthermore, the award would have been no less acceptable than the recommendations, for the alternative to not accepting the award would have been the partition of India. When faced with that alternative, Nehru might have asked the plan to be enforced as an Award, as he in fact did when he told Mountbatten to drop his plan of partition and impose the Mission Plan as a settlement, since the Congress had 'accepted the Plan.'[30]

'Ironically, Congress would have accepted with relief in 1947, the terms that they had rejected in 1946, but by that time it was too late. . . .'[31]

But even if the objective of the Cabinet Mission was to make recommendations, it was also its duty to be fair and just to both the main parties on a point which the Mission itself considered fundamental—the grouping. And yet, when Wavell wanted the correct position to be made clear to Gandhi, Pethick-Lawrence asked him not to press the point. Even after the Muslim League had withdrawn its acceptance of the Plan, and had adopted the policy of 'Direct Action' in July 1946, and even after the Calcutta killings in August 1946, Wavell's requests for a categorical statement on the correct interpretation of the

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grouping provisions, before the Constituent Assembly was convened, were rejected. This not only undermined his authority but led to the absurd spectacle of an Assembly being convened to give effect to the Mission Plan when the two main parties differed on an admittedly fundamental point. Over six months were allowed to pass, on one excuse or another, till the demand for the resignation of the Muslim League nominees, and the blunt language in which they, and the Viceroy, put their case, forced Attlee's hand. This unpardonable delay left the Congress and the Muslim League more embittered, because the conduct of Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence had led the Congress to believe that under no circumstances would the British Government take a decisive stand against the Congress and uphold the Muslim League's stand on the grouping provisions of the Plan. Had Wavell's advice been accepted, and the authoritative interpretation of the grouping provisions made clear to Gandhi, months of bickering and bitterness about the interpretation of those provisions would have been avoided. For, had the Congress rejected the Plan, as authoritatively interpreted, nothing worse would have happened in its rejection in May 1947. The Break-down Plan (Wavell's Plan for orderly withdrawal) would have gone into operation and the announcement of an orderly and phased withdrawal by March 1948 might have brought the parties together in order to avoid partition. If, however, they were not brought together, partition could have taken place in an orderly way without being compressed into the brief period of Mountbatten's Viceroyalty—resulting in holocaust at the end of it.[32]

> Wavell persuaded Gandhi and Nehru to accept the Mission's interpretation of the grouping provisions in order to secure communal harmony, but they rejected his suggestion almost with contempt . . . Wavell struggled hard to preserve the unity of India by pressing for the acceptance of the Mission Plan which was based on that unity. Nehru did not respond because he believed that with Mountbatten as Viceroy the Congress would preserve the unity of India on its own terms . . . Gandhi and Nehru, faced with Mountbatten's Partition Plan, asked for the Cabinet Mission Plan to be enforced on an Award. But by then they had already killed the plan . . . when Congress accepted partition, it believed that Pakistan was not viable and would be forced to reunite with India.[33]

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The Muslim League was accused of using harsh words against the nationalist Muslims, including Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Abul Kalam Azad. The Khan was dubbed by some Pathan leaders as a non-Muslim. Azad was described as a show boy. However the treatment meted out to them by the Congress, was shabby. Although Azad was Congress President, he was ordered by Gandhi to suppress his own plan for Hindu-Muslim unity. As President, he got the Cabinet Mission Plan approved by the Congress and yet, in his presence, Nehru sabotaged the plan while talking to the Mission members and Viceroy and Azad as President was reduced to a mere camp follower and Nehru's yes-man. As for Bacha Khan, he was neither consulted nor informed before the Congress rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan for a United India and accepted the partition of India which had a direct bearing on the future of the Pathans. And Nehru added insult to injury by opposing the third choice in the referendum (independent Pakhtunistan), even though Mountbatten earlier had an open mind on the issue. Such disgraceful treatment of the two top most nationalist Muslim leaders of India exposed Congress's pretensions of representing the Muslims of India.

Together Azad and Bacha Khan constituted the two pillars on which rested the national credentials of the Congress. And yet, both were treated with contempt by the Congress. Had they openly supported the Cabinet Mission Plan as envisaged by its authors, they could have got a fair deal for the Muslims, they could have restrained the Congress from the double game it was playing to manipulate the Plan which scared away the Muslim League, they could have preserved the unity of India which was their passion, they could have helped avoid confrontation and bloodbath, and they could have contributed to a smooth transfer of power. But, unfortunately they did not possess enough courage to stand up to Gandhi and Nehru to register their protest. Both suppressed their conscience when they should have been outspoken. Both became eloquent when it was too late. Azad revealed his thoughts and criticized the Congress in his book *India Wins Freedom*. Bacha Khan held the Congress responsible for 'throwing him to the wolves' and for not intimidating Pakistan over the issue of Pakhtunistan.

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9

Pakhtunistan and Referendum

When Abdul Ghaffar Khan merged the *Khudai Khidmatgars* with the Congress, few could visualize the future course of history; still fewer could foresee that the Afghan current and the Indian current would be guided to flow to a common destination; and that, the man who was destined to play that unique and tortuous role of guiding the flow, would be none else but Ghaffar Khan himself.

In 1947, the British government announced its plan to partition India, but aware of the political leanings of the Khan brothers and their followers, the British offered to hold a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the Pathans. This was rejected by the Khan brothers on the plea that the Frontier should be treated at par with other provinces where the wishes of the people were ascertained through the provincial assemblies. This was not accepted by the British on the ground that while it was clear that the provincial assemblies in Sindh and Punjab reflected the wishes of the people, doubts had arisen in case of the Frontier, where the Pakistan movement had gained far greater support since the provincial elections. While it is true that the Muslim League had won significant support among the Frontier masses, this support was not reflected in the election results. 'Quit-India', was a popular slogan of the Congress during the elections. A united, federal India was still a distinct possibility. A clear choice between joining either India or Pakistan became possible for the Pathans only after the collapse of the Cabinet Mission Plan, followed by the announcement of the Partition Plan. A year had elapsed between the two plans, during which the Pathans had deserted the Congress, and

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switched their loyalties to the Muslim League. Earlier than this, the choice of Pakistan was not there in a concrete shape. Finally, and more important, the tribal areas could not be taken for granted and their wishes had to be formally ascertained through the traditional *Jirga* systems. On 28 April, Mountbatten visited the Frontier to assess the situation personally, and only after he was convinced that the position had radically changed since the last elections, did he finally make up his mind to hold a plebiscite. On 1 May 1947, the Congress Working Committee accepted the partition of India.

> Abdul Ghaffar Khan was sad. He had cast his lot with Congress. . . . Now, owing to his ideological differences with Muslim League, the *Khudai Khidmatgars* would have no place in Pakistan. 'We shall be out-casts in the eyes of both (India and Pakistan). But I do not worry so long as Mahatmaji is there,' said the Khan. . . . He was down with fever and yet he was pressing Gandhiji's limbs. On being dissuaded by the latter he became emotional, 'it is [the] last day, so let me. It will make me well. Before long we shall become aliens. . . . The end of our long fight will be to pass under the domination of Pakistan—away from *Bapu*, away from India. Who knows what the future holds for us.'

Gandhiji responded, 'Verily Badshah Khan is a *fakir*. Independence will come, but the brave Pathan will lose his. They are faced with a grim prospect. But Badshah Khan is a man of God.'[1] On 31 May 1947, Gandhi, finding Badshah Khan in despair, told him: 'Non-violence knows no despair. . . . You can declare that Pakistan is unacceptable to you and then brave the worst. What fear can there be for those who are pledged to do or die?'[2] On his part Badshah Khan remained steadfast in his rejection of Pakistan, till his death.

On 2 June the partition plan was announced and on 3 June the Congress Working Committee met to approve it.

> Abdul Ghaffar Khan was stunned and for several minutes he could hardly utter a word. He said if the Congress deserted him, the reaction in the Frontier would be terrible and his enemies would laugh at him and even his friends would say that so long as Congress needed the Frontier they supported the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, when Congress came to terms with Muslim League . . . it did not

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> even consult the Frontier. He said that Frontier would regard this as an act of treachery if Congress threw the *Khudai Khidmatgars* to the wolves. . . . He added, 'We stood by you and had undergone great sacrifice for attaining freedom, but you have now deserted us. We shall not agree to hold the referendum because we had decisively won the elections (1946) on the issue of Hindustan versus Pakistan and proclaimed the Pakhtun view on it to the world. Now, as India has disowned us, why should we have referendum on Hindustan v/s Pakistan? Let it be on Pakhtunistan v/s Pakistan.' Emerging from the Committee, he sat on the steps and said, 'only Gandhiji and I opposed the decision. . . . Patel said I was worrying over nothing. Azad said I should now join Muslim League. Did they imagine we would compromise our principles for the sake of power?' With 'an aching heart,' Gandhiji assured the Khan that should the *Khudai Khidmatgars* receive a raw deal in Pakistan, India would mount an attack on Pakistan and he would be a party to it.[3]

Gandhi's threat to Pakistan infuriated the Pathans and drastically diminished the support of the Khan brothers in the Frontier. The Pathans had already seen *ahimsa* in action through the pistol which dangled by Dr Khan Saheb's side. Now the apostle of *ahimsa* was threatening to invade Pakistan if it misbehaved with the Khan's followers. Gandhi's earlier advice to the British to surrender to Hitler, and to the Congress not to have any armed forces in a free India, were still fresh in the Pathan minds. These somersaults in the creed of *ahimsa*, as well as the claim that this creed was synonymous with Islam, further isolated the Khan from his own followers. The Khan's concern that the Pathans would face extinction under a 'brute and barbaric state' of Pakistan, where only the law of the jungle would prevail, was not shared by his Congress Working Committee colleagues. Bacha Khan was a man of strong faith—in God and in *ahimsa;* he was brave, had confronted the British; suffered in jails and had faith in the loyalty of his followers. Then why was he afraid of a referendum?

It is significant that at this stage, Gandhi did his best to get the Congress high command to revert to the Cabinet Mission Plan of 16 May 1946 (a federal India with regional autonomy) but he failed. The high command felt strongly that the Cabinet Mission Plan would not ensure Pathan autonomy and that the

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only way to guarantee that was to fight the referendum (as announced by the Viceroy) with all their might and win it. Gandhi persuaded the Viceroy and Nehru to have the referendum deferred or postponed, as it would give rise to riots and confrontation. Nehru argued that referendum was a part of the deal which included partition of Punjab, Bengal and Assam, to which the Congress was a party and he saw no way of wriggling out of it. (Earlier he had wriggled out of the Cabinet Mission Plan because it had given regional autonomy to undivided Punjab and amalgamated Bengal and Assam, proving conclusively that he preferred partition, which meant letting down the Khan brothers). Nehru saw no possibilities of any violent conflict in the NWFP. On the contrary, he saw good prospects of a Congress victory. In the bright hope that Congress stood a good chance of winning in the referendum, Nehru opposed the introduction of the third choice, namely, independent Pakhtunistan; he explained that the third choice in the referendum would confuse the voter. He opposed the Khan brothers' boycott of the referendum, as that would mean 'acceptance of Muslim League domination and surrender to Pakistan.' He added, 'to fight democratically, and to be defeated in the process does not weaken us for long, and, we can renew the struggle later. But to give up without a struggle means certain lack of integrity through fear of consequences and leads to the collapse of the organization which was unable to face the issue. The only right course is to accept the referendum and we have a good chance of winning it. If there is a risk in this course, there are greater risks of bloodshed in other courses. I have suggested a brave and a frank course of accepting the battle peacefully. To give up the battle, when the final decisions are being taken, will result in deep psychological injury to our people.' Nehru was also convinced that the 'boycott of [the] referendum would mean that the Frontier Congress Ministry did not represent [the] bulk of the Pathans. It would be difficult for the Ministry to continue after the decision in referendum is given against them, or by a waiver in the referendum.'[5]

Nehru's advice to the Khan brothers, that 'to fight democratically and to be defeated in the process does not weaken us for long, and, we can renew the struggle later' was

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highly significant. On this issue Mountbatten reported to the British government,

> I pointed out to Nehru that since it was at Nehru's own request that I had dropped the original proposal to vote for India, Pakistan or independence, they could hardly expect me to reintroduce it at this stage. Nehru quite openly admitted that the NWFP could not possibly stand by itself, and it became clear to me that this was a device to free Dr Khan Saheb's party from the odium of being connected with the Congress during the referendum period, since Nehru spoke about Dr Khan Saheb wishing to join India at subsequent stage.

This report also stated that Congress emissaries approached the Afghan government to extend active support to the Khan brothers' campaign for the independent state of Pakhtunistan. Independent Pakhtunistan was the third option demanded by Gandhi under pressure from the Khan brothers.[6] By conceding the demand of the Khan brothers, the Congress would have had to concede similar demands from other quarters. The Viceroy obliged Nehru by closing that option. But the Khan brothers were assured that referendum, even if lost, was not the last word, and that the Frontier could rejoin India later, via Kashmir. In May 1947, Acharya Kirpalani, the Congress President, visited Kashmir to persuade the Maharaja to join the Indian Constituent Assembly.[7] In its lead article 'Pathanistan' the *Tribune*, in its issue of 16 May 1947, supporting the demand for Pakhtunistan said, 'This Pathanistan can link itself with Hindustan, if it likes, through Kashmir, which may be converted into a democratic unit with the popular Nationalist party exercising governmental authority.' Here was the first hint of the method eventually employed: put Sheikh Abdullah's pro-Congress Party in the seat of power, and use it as an instrument for further moves.[8] The League regarded these attempts by Congress leaders to secure Kashmir as part of a border strategy covering Kashmir and the NWFP. It appeared as if Kashmir was being used as a back door to reach the Congress dominated NWFP. MC Mahajan, an Indian on the Punjab Boundary Commission, and Prime Minister of Kashmir at the time of Kashmir's accession to India, revealed that 'Kabul was suggested by some as a neighbour who may possibly lend a helping hand.'[9]

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Abdul Ghaffar Khan, however, wanted Congress to take a forthright stand, but the Congress could not oblige. Ghaffar Khan wrote to Gandhi on 8 June, 'We can not agree to holding of referendum on the issues contained in the partition plan. It will lead to violence. We are also against Pakistan. We would like to have a free Pathan State within India.' On 11 June he wrote 'We again considered it. We all desire that the issue be amended on the basis of Pakistan or a free Pathan State.' On 15 June, the AICC ratified the decision of the Congress Working Committee by 157 votes in favour to 15 against. Moved by the Khan's reaction, Gandhi, in his prayer meeting on 16 June 1947, spoke on 'Non-violence of the brave,' and said, 'Today, even Badshah Khan, the brave and valiant Pathan lacks it (non-violence of the brave) in full measure. He is afraid that if anybody said to the Pathan if he should join Pakistan or India, it would lead to fratricidal conflict among them on an unprecedented scale. What can he do? Non-violence of the brave is not a thing that can be manufactured to order.'[10]

On 18 June Abdul Ghaffar Khan, accompanied by Gandhi met Jinnah at the Viceroy's house. The Khan put the following pre-conditions for joining Pakistan:

a. it should be on honourable terms
b. in case Pakistan decided to stay under British domination, the Pathans should have the power to opt out of such a dominion, and form a separate independent state, and
c. all matters concerning tribal people should be settled by the Pathans themselves without the interference and domination of the non-Pathans—'a right which has been conceded even by the existing Constituent Assembly.'

The talks were friendly, but there was no compromise. On 18 June, Gandhi, in his prayer meeting advocated a separate constitution for the Pathans, in order to pacify the Khan after having failed to convince the Congress. By conceding a separate constitution to the Pathans, he opened a pandora's box. The Dewan of Travancore condemned Gandhi for advocating an independent Pakhtunistan and thereby encouraging the princely states to make similar demands. Realising his blunder Gandhi retracted and claimed he was misunderstood. He was in a quandary. By remaining quiet he was hurting Ghaffar Khan. By speaking, he was hurting India. On 19 June Ghaffar Khan

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wrote to Jinnah and informed him of the Frontier Congress resolution demanding a 'free Pathan State.' On 24 June he called upon the Pathans to boycott the referendum. He claimed that a great majority of the Pakhtuns stood for the establishment of a 'free Pathan State' and asserted that he was prepared for holding a referendum on that issue.[11]

On 21 June 1947, Badshah Khan convened a joint session of the Frontier Congress Committee, the Congress Parliamentary Committee, the *Khudai Khidmatgars* and *Zalm-e-Pakhtun* at Bannu. The session was chaired by Khan Amir Mohammed Khan, President of the Frontier Provincial Congress Committee. After assessing the chances of support for a call to boycott the referendum, the meeting passed a unanimous resolution that a 'free Pathan State will be framed on the basis of Islamic conception of democracy, equality and social justice. . . .'[12] The Bannu Resolution was a landmark in the history of Pakhtun-Congress relations. It exposed the frustration of its authors with the Congress which claimed nationalist credentials, but when put to the test, had shown its communal tendencies. The resolution echoed the Congress assessment that the influence of the Khan brothers had already declined. It bore testimony to the bitter reality that the Congress had wooed the Khan brothers only for as long as they commanded unchallenged following among the Pakhtuns. It represented a silent protest against trading off of the Pakhtuns as a people for a piece of non-Pakhtun land elsewhere in India. The reference to Islam in the Resolution was a last ditch effort to rescue Pan-Pakhtunism, which had been submerged in Indian nationalism.

Dr Khan Saheb wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru, 'We have learnt that the Afghan government have officially approached the government of India (for laying claim to Frontier province). We have been placed in an unenviable position. The Afghan government is taking advantage. We know nothing of a Congress emissary approaching the Afghan government.' Had Ghaffar Khan publicly denounced these secret contacts between Kabul and the Congress, he would have proved his bonafides. But, as it turned out, these contacts became more intimate and sinister in the days to come.

On 27 June Ghaffar Khan addressed a meeting at which he said, 'We have decided to establish Pathanistan, which will

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be an independent state. . . . The seeds of Third World War have been sown. Britishers want to make the Frontier a military base against Russia... the arrival of General Montgomery and his meeting with Mr Jinnah are indeed most significant.'[13] On 30 June Mahatma Gandhi, in his prayer meeting, attempted to contradict Badshah Khan, 'The charge of the new cry of Pathanistan is being flung on Badshah Khan's face. He does not want to create an additional state. If he can frame his own constitution, he can gladly make his choice (India or Pakistan). It is difficult for me to understand any objection to this demand.[14] The more serious charge is that Badshah Khan is playing into the hands of Afghanistan. He is incapable of any underhand dealing. He would not allow the Frontier province to be absorbed by Afghanistan.'[15] The Viceroy wrote to Gandhi objecting to Badshah Khan's agitation against the referendum. Gandhi, defending the agitation, replied on 5 July: 'Agitation is undoubtedly being carried out by Badshah Khan and his lieutenants to tell the voters that it was wrong for them to take part in the voting.' On 12 July the Khan wrote to Gandhi,

> I and my workers have been going from village to village to remain non-violent even under provocation. But they (the villagers) call us *kafirs* and resort to abusive language. I have been hooted. I feel there is conspiracy between Muslim League and referendum officials. Presiding officials have actively encouraged the passing of hundreds of bogus votes. In some places 80-90% votes have been polled. Large number of Punjabis have entered NWFP to openly incite violence, telling them that after establishment of Pakistan the traitors will be hanged.[16]

Before the referendum, Governor Olaf Caroe was withdrawn by the British as the Khans doubted his impartiality. The referendum was conducted between 6 and 18 July by Sir Rob Lockhart, Chief of Southern Command of the army, who was far removed from the scene of contest. Out of a total of 5,72,799 listed voters, the turn-out was 2,92,118 (51%), in favour of Pakistan 2,89,244 and in favour of India 2,874. The turn-out was impressive by any standards anywhere in the world, including the USA, where 50% turn-out is considered high. But if it was less, it belied the propaganda that 80 to 90% votes were polled through bogus voting. The boycott call had no

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impact. The supervision was impartial. The votes polled in favour of India could not have been those of the Muslim Leaguers. They must have been *Khudai Khidmatgars*, who disregarded the boycott call, and still desired to join India. The Congress accepted the result as reflective of the peoples' will. However, Bacha Khan rejected the outcome saying,

> Since we had boycotted, the field was open to Muslim League. Despite its rigging it could hardly muster 50.1 per cent votes, which is not enough to decide the destiny of a nation. The British were partisan, they asked the police and army to cast votes in place of those who boycotted. In 1985, my jail mate Colonel Bashir told me in the Haripur Central Jail that during the referendum, he and his soldiers voted for Pakistan many times at Litambar polling station near Bannu, in the name of those who boycotted....[17]

The Congress high command accepted the outcome of the referendum gracefully; Patel and Azad stated categorically that the referendum results were a definite indication of the waning influence of the Khan brothers. On 27 July Gandhi advised Abdul Ghaffar Khan to return to Pakistan, where his future and 'his duty lay to make Pakistan really *Pak* (pure)'. But the Khan still did not accept the results. He stated,

> The Congress deserted us. If we had agreed to leave the Congress, the Britishers would have granted us all our demands, and it is my firm conviction that if the Congress had lent support to our demand, as it had done in the case of Gurdaspur, Jinnah would have been compelled to agree to our proposal—Pakhtunistan or Pakistan. Jinnah sent us messages time and again to make common cause with him, in which case he would concede to us whatever we wanted. One such message came to me when the partition was being discussed by the Congress Working Committee. It was to the effect that since India was in any case going to be divided, why did we not join him and obtain whatever we wished. We never compromised on principles.[18]

The Khan was convinced that through some underhand deal, similar to the one the Congress had struck with the British for getting Gurdaspur, Jinnah could have been squeezed into accepting the Khan's demand for Pakhtunistan. In that hope, he had rejected Jinnah's overtures for reciprocity. But the

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Congress did not oblige Ghaffar Khan who felt that he had been pushed by the Congress into the wilderness of Pakistan. He said, 'I had set up *Khudai Khidmatgar* (and Pan-Pakhtunism) in 1929, and I stand for the same principles today; I shall not forsake my principles even if I stand alone in the world.'

Maulana Azad, who was closely involved in the crucial negotiations all along, records his own assessment:

> When [the] Khan brothers found that Congress was now committed to partition, they did not know what to do. They could not possibly refuse the plebiscite (as) it would be an admission that they did not enjoy the support of the people. They raised the slogan of Pakhtunistan—independence of Frontier. Mountbatten did not agree to the third choice. Khan brothers thereupon . . . called upon Pathans to boycott the plebiscite. Their opposition was however of no avail. The plebiscite was held and a large proportion of the people voted in favour of Pakistan. If the Khan brothers had not boycotted the plebiscite and their supporters had worked earnestly, nobody can say for certain what the result would have been. . . . Dr Khan Saheb saw that the only chance of retaining the leadership of the Frontier was to raise the demand of Pakhtunistan — many Pathans would prefer a small state of their own as they feared the domination of the Punjab. . . . After the partition, Khan brothers modified their attitude in conformity with the demand of the situation. They declared that their demand for free Pakhtunistan did not mean the creation of a separate state but the recognition of full autonomy as a unit of Pakistan. They explained that what they stood for was a constitution of Pakistan which would guarantee full provincial autonomy to its units and thus secure social and cultural life of the Pathans. Without such safeguards Punjab would dominate the whole of Pakistan and deny the legitimate rights of Pathans and other minorities.[19]

The story of the referendum would be incomplete without Wali Khan's version, 'The Congress warned the Viceroy that Jinnah would go back on his commitment (namely the details of the Partition Plan) and that Mountbatten should not fall into his trap like Wavell had done (his thesis is that Wavell fell into Jinnah's trap who rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan, but his thesis has been rejected by Maulana Azad, who has blamed Nehru and Congress for wrecking the Plan. His theory has also been rejected by other neutral Indian and British sources)

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Jinnah nodded his assent, so did the Congress (to the Partition Plan).' But this time, it was not Nehru, but another Congressman, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who attempted to wreck the plan. Mountbatten and Nehru met at Simla. Then Nehru spoke to Dr Khan Saheb, who agreed to the referendum but later retracted. Wali Khan, agreeing with the Congress, has decried the short-sightedness of the Khan brothers, who adopted a negative attitude. 'They demanded referendum on Pakhtunistan which was rejected by Mountbatten.' Actually, the referendum on Pakhtunistan was rejected by the Congress high command, which had traded the Pathans for territorial bargains in the rest of India, and dreamt of annexation of Pakhtunistan via Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Wali Khan believes that 'the only way out of the predicament faced by the Khan brothers would have been to pass a resolution in the Provincial Assembly establishing Pakhtunistan. That resolution would have had an assured support of the Constituent Assembly of undivided India, controlled by the Congress. If the people had used the referendum to announce their accession to India, instead of refraining from voting, they would have certainly got complete independence and also a promise of protection from India. We should have explained to our people that if they wanted Pakhtunistan, they should cast their vote for India. When I look back in retrospect, I feel that we were fooled by what then seemed like "human consideration," and "Islamic fervour" of the leaders of the Muslim League. . . . Even as a part of India, the proposition would have been quite viable. For, if East and West Pakistan could be a part of the same federation, . . . why could NWFP not be a part of India, with a distance of only 300 miles of Punjab, a brotherly territory. . . '[20]

The wisdom of hindsight usually comes when it is too late. However, it is clear that Wali Khan wishes that political battles should have been fought openly. It must also be appreciated that, for the first time, a political heir of the Khan brothers admitted that there was no rigging in the referendum, either by the British or by the Muslim officers. The voters were just 'fooled' by the slogans of the Muslim League. Jinnah would not have liked any territory joining Pakistan through rigging. As for 'fooling' the voters in the name of Islam, the Khan brothers also attempted to do it in their Bannu Resolution for

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setting up an Islamic Democracy of Pakhtunistan. But by that time it was already too late. The battle, to be fair, should have been fought on the basis of Nehru's plan, now endorsed by Wali Khan.

If the battle of referendum was lost, it should have been accepted in good grace. If the issue was not made clear-cut, as now lamented by Wali Khan, and messed up by the Congress leadership of NWFP, the controversy should have come to an end when the results were announced. If the strategy was to accept the partition plan in toto, and prevent Jinnah from wriggling out, as believed by Wali Khan, then it was the Khans who wriggled out. If the strategy was to obey the command of the Congress high command, then the Khans failed to obey it. But if the strategy was defiance, confrontation and acrimony, then the Khans succeeded admirably in creating all these, between India and Pakistan, and Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Pathans' love for Congress and India, assumed to be the basis of Wali Khan's hypothesis, discussed earlier, was better explained by Gandhi, who was convinced that it was based more on their blind faith in Badshah Khan than on their conviction. Gandhi's observation fits with the British view of Pathans. Sir William Barton explains,

> Why, one might ask should Pathans in their thousands pay homage to this Hindu ascetic and to his Hindu colleague Pandit Nehru? Is it not because of Gandhi's success in forcing the mighty British Empire to yield to the Congress attack? In other words, is it not an expression of their antipathy to alien rule? The astonishing paradox is explained by the fact that the Pathans want national freedom irrespective of the form of government: if the little *Bania* helps them by his political mysticism to break the frame work of British rule in India they will accept his alliance to that extent; no more. They would never adopt the socialism of Nehru, they would never submit to Hindu rule in India.[21]

Wali Khan's reliable source, Alan Campbell Johnson, in his diary *Mission with Mountbatten* records the momentous events from day to day. On 19 April 1947, he records that Dr Khan Saheb wanted the Viceroy to visit NWFP because the 'Frontier situation calls for special treatment beforehand.'[22] On 21 April 1947, Mountbatten 'indicated to Liaqat Ali that his final decision

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as to whether there should be a fresh election in NWFP would depend upon his estimate of Muslim League's ability to form a responsible ministry. He said he would make it abundantly clear that inspite of appearances, he would not in fact yield to force or to the threat of force.'[23] Thus, on 28 April 1947, Mountbatten visited the NWFP. There was a pro-Pakistan demonstration consisting of over 75,000 people outside his residence. On the advice of Dr Khan Saheb, Governor Sir Olaf Caroe, he and Lady Mountbatten came out to meet the crowd and pacified them. He told Dr Khan Saheb,

> The Frontier position involves particular difficulty for me. I shall be telling the Muslim League that I shall not yield to violence. Privately, I think the elections are necessary but I make no guarantee to Muslim League, that there will be any. Jinnah's promise is that if there is an election, there will be no violence. You must trust my integrity. Jinnah is calling upon his followers to call off civil disobedience.

In the last election the Congress won on the basis of 'Quit India'. But many people who had originally supported the Congress were now wondering whether by doing so they would come under Hindu control. When Dr Khan Saheb turned to Pathanistan the discussion became explosive. 'If you destroy the Pathan nation,' warned Khan Saheb, 'terrible things will happen.' Dr Khan Saheb alleged that Muslim Leaguers were allowed by officials to break the law. Caroe replied that he knew of 'no single instance where officials were not trying to do their duty, but they were always blamed.'[24]

Mountbatten then had a meeting with the Hindus and asked them if they supported the government. The Hindus replied that they were prepared to live in peace with any government. Mountbatten was pleased by their attitude.

On 29 April 1947, Mountbatten visited the Khyber Pass, and met with a *Jirga* of various tribes. The *Jirga* was not hand picked, as Nehru had warned the Viceroy, that it would be, but genuinely representative. 'Their leaders made it clear that while they belonged to no particular party, their sympathies were with the Muslims. This *jirga* consisted of Afridis, Shinwaris, Zakahe, Malikdin, Sipah, Salmani and Kullaghori tribes. On

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return to Peshawar, the Viceroy was met by a smaller *jirga* of Waziris and Mahsuds. They too frankly expressed their opposition to a Hindu raj. Mountbatten took note of their feelings about Pakistan and took action for release of prisoners arrested in pro-Pakistan agitation.'[25]

In his diary of 23 June 1947 Campbell Johnson records: 'All India Congress Committee accepts partition with referendum in NWFP. . . . At first Dr Khan Saheb threatened to boycott it. But Caroe is retiring on leave while the referendum is being held (as per letters exchanged between Caroe and Viceroy). Mountbatten wisely decided to entrust the province to a military regime and Lt-Gen. Sir Rob Lockhart, GOC-in-C, Southern Command is to take Caroe's place to supervise the delicate operation of referendum. The peak of the Frontier crisis has passed.'[26]

That was the official diary of the Viceroy's agent, certified as authentic by Wali Khan. Now to quote a professional journalist:

> Late April 1947, Mountbatten visits Frontier. The news that he was coming had swept over the Frontier . . . tens of thousands of men from every corner of the province had been converging on Peshawar. . . . They were there because of the anomalous political situation of a province whose population was 93% Muslim, but was governed by allies of the Congress Party. The Congress leader was a Frontier tribal Chieftain named Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a bearded giant who resembled an old testament prophet and had devoted his life to carrying Gandhi's message of love and passive resistance to Pathan tribesmen, for whom the blood fued and the vendetta were an integral part of existence. His incongruous figure had gotten their support, until, faithful to Gandhi, he had opposed Jinnah's call for an Islamic State. Since then, stirred by Jinnah's agents, the population had turned against Ghaffar Khan and the government he had installed in Peshawar. The huge, howling crowd greeting Mountbatten . . . was meant to give final proof that it was the Muslim League and not the 'Frontier Gandhi,' that now command the province's support. . . . From tens of thousands of throat came an interminable constantly repeated shout . . . *Mountbatten Zindabad.*[27]

All political issues in India were subjected to public debate, through which interested parties had the opportunity to express

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themselves on those issues through various means, including discussions, meetings, rallies, resolutions, agitations, press statements etc. The issues of separate versus joint elections, the separation of Sindh from Bombay, partition of Bengal, provincial status to Frontier and Balochistan, the Lahore Resolution, United India, all were closely debated and studied by all concerned. The Minto-Morley reforms, Montague-Chelmsford reforms, 1935 Act, Cripps Plan, Cabinet Mission Plan, and the Partition Plan emerged out of political dialogue. The Nehrū Report and Jinnah's 14 Points were similarly subjected to public debate. Indian politics had followed the British pattern which called for full, free and frank debate on an extended basis to enable the people to weigh the pros and cons. The only issues which were made exceptions to this time-honoured rule were, (a) Quit-India Resolution of 1942 and (b) the demand for Pakhtunistan in July 1947. The authors of the Quit-India movement believed that Japan would defeat Britain and offer India to them on a silver platter.

The Pakhtunistan demand came as a surprise to all—to Congress, to Muslim League, to the British, and to the Pathans themselves. The Khan brothers were stunned, when they discovered that the Congress had already accepted partition and referendum, leaving no option for them. Their demand for Pakhtunistan was rejected by the Congress without a second thought, and later by the Pathans, in a democratic manner. Abdul Wali Khan has aptly termed the boycott of the referendum as unwise and thinks that the Pathans could have used the terms of the referendum to achieve their goal of Pakhtunistan, if they had played their cards well.

The leadership in Pakistan understandably did not trust the Khan brothers in view of the Indo-Kabul axis to establish Pakhtunistan, and Indian attempts to establish a link with Pakhtunistan via Kashmir and Afghanistan. However, even after the referendum in NWFP Dr Khan Saheb continued as chief minister in a critical period. On the establishment of Pakistan, Governor Sir George Cummingham invited Dr Khan Saheb and his colleagues to the oath-taking ceremony, but Tendulkar records that

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> Dr Khan Saheb was not asked to take the oath. Thereafter the governor asked if Dr Khan Saheb would attend the flag hoisting ceremony and the latter replied in the affirmative. However, he did not attend the ceremony, as the governor could not guarantee his security, since the arrangements were in the hands of Muslim League National Guards. 'We were never asked to take the oath of allegiance, we were simply asked to resign which we refused to do. And then our ministry was dismissed.'[28]

For Pakistan, that was a crucial moment in its history. In the face of the clandestine Indo-Kabul axis, the call for Pakhtunistan, Kabul's repudiation of the Durand Line and opposition to Pakistan's membership of the United Nations, 'the Pakistani leadership suspected a co-ordinated conspiracy in the NWFP and Kashmir, and feared that the new state might be still-born and crushed by a sort of pincer movement.'[29] The responsibility for removing these fears and suspicions rested entirely with the Khan brothers but they did not do anything to satisfy the Pakistan authorities, who were left with no alternative but to remove Dr Khan Saheb from chief ministership. As Birdwood puts it,

> If India was to reach Hunza, Nagar and Gilgit (and the developments were taking shape in that direction), there would in fact be established a common India-Afghanistan frontier of 50 miles. . . . Here we should only recall that in essence it amounts to a suggestion that there has been an understanding between India and Afghanistan for the encouragement of a tribal autonomous state of North-West Frontier at the expense of Pakistan. If Afghanistan and India were actually in physical contact through Kashmir, Pakistan could claim to be the victim of a 'pincer' operation.[30]

NOTES

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3. Ibid., p. 424.
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8. Ibid., p. 97 quoting *Dawn*, 2 August 1970.
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15. Ibid., p. 444.
16. Ibid., pp. 445-6.
17. Ibid., p. 447. Also see Bacha Khan's Autobiography, p. 177.
18. Ibid., p. 447.
19. Azad, Abul Kalam, *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 212-13.
20. Wali Khan, Abdul, *Facts are Facts*, pp. 122-7.
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22. Campbell-Johnson, Alan, *Mission with Mountbatten*, pp. 66, 67.
23. Ibid., Diary of 21 April 1947.
24. Ibid., p. 74.
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26. Ibid., Diary of 23 June 1947.
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10

Pakhtunistan–Rule of the Pathan by the Pathan and for the Pathan

The man who formed the idea of Pakhtunistan was a man of great conviction. He learnt the art of politics at the feet of Mahatma Gandhi, whose ways were unpredictable and means powerful. As a Congressman Ghaffar Khan participated in the battle of independence, in the battle against partition, and in the struggle against referendum. Some battles were won, others were lost. These experiences, along with long periods of imprisonments, strengthened his resolve and hardened his convictions. He never surrendered, nor compromised. When the Congress decided on partition and referendum, he did not agree. The Congress managed to convince Gandhi but failed to convert Badshah Khan. To appease him, Gandhi had to plead with Nehru and the Viceroy to accommodate Badshah Khan's demands. Badshah Khan lost the battle with the Congress but would not admit defeat; he therefore, boycotted the referendum. He was convinced that the issue of Pakhtunistan, which he had raised, would never die, as it had deeper roots, and both internal and external support was assured.

On 3-4 September 1947, Abdul Ghaffar Khan convened a joint meeting of the provincial *Jirga*, the Parliamentary Party, the *Zalm-e-Pakhtun*, the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, and representatives from the tribal areas at Sardaryab. He announced at this meeting (a) that they regarded Pakistan as their own country, (b) that dismissal of Dr Khan Saheb's ministry was undemocratic, but no protest was to be made, (c) connections with the Congress were severed, and (d) Congress tri-colour flag was to be replaced by the original red flag of the *Khudai Khidmatgars*.[1]

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Having declared allegiance to Pakistan, Abdul Ghaffar Khan gave a new definition of Pakhtunistan: 'This new state will comprise the six settled districts of NWFP and all such other contiguous areas inhabited by the Pakhtuns which may wish to join the new state. This state will enter into agreement on defence, external affairs and communication with Pakistan.'[2] These moves made by the Khan gave the impression that a change of direction had taken place in his mind in the face of new realities. It has been the subject matter of debate and controversy, as to whether these moves represented genuine allegiance to Pakistan or just a tactical retreat to gain time, to reflect upon the new developments, to watch the Indo-Afghan reactions, to take stock of the repercussions among the tribal chiefs in general, and the Fakir of Ipi in particular, and finally, to assess the outcome of the offers of accession made by some princely states to Kabul and Delhi. Was the Sardaryab Resolution a trial balloon released to see the response of Pakistani authorities, to test their ability to anticipate future moves on Pakhtunistan made within Pakistan and abroad, and to judge their capability to deal with any emerging situation on the diplomatic and other fronts?

Simultaneously, a strong commitment to Pakistan's integrity and solidarity was developing, from Khyber to Karachi. The tribal areas did not lag behind. Various tribes held their *Jirgas* to swear allegiance and declare support for Pakistan. The Afridis held their *Jirga* at Khyber House on 1 November; North Waziris at Miran Shah on 1 December; Ahmed Zai Waziris at Wana on 1 December 1; Mahsuds at Para Chinar on 1 December; Lower Kurrum tribes at Shabqadar on 7 December; Orakzai and 'Pass' Afridis on 1 November 1947. In their oaths of allegiance, the tribes expressed their wish to have exactly the same relations with Pakistan, as they had with the British. On 17 April 1948, when Quaid-i-Azam visited the Frontier as the Governor-General, a grand *Jirga* of all the tribes met him and pledged their loyalty to Pakistan, with the request that they be placed directly under the control of the Central Government. The de facto accession was given de jure constitutional status with retrospective effect from 15 August 1947.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan took oath of allegiance to Pakistan as a member of Parliament in February 1948. In his speech in

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the Constituent Assembly he said, 'Pakhtunistan would be an autonomous unit in Pakistan.' He disowned independent Pakhtunistan and denied any link with Afghanistan on this issue. He denied any moves by Afghanistan for the grant of self-determination to Pathans. In March 1948, he said,

> In Karachi, Jinnah invited me to lunch and then he said, 'Why don't you work with us?' I said, 'Ours was essentially a movement for social reform. [The] British government had forced us into politics by making it impossible for us to engage in social activity. Where was the room for cooperation when Liaqat had dubbed us as Hindus and traitors?' Jinnah said apologetically that Liaqat's remarks were most improper and uncalled for, for which he was sorry. I said, 'socially backward people can not develop a political sense, and without a sound political sense there can be no democracy. That is why I am devoting myself to social work.' Jinnah was deeply moved. He rose from his seat and warmly embraced me and promised to give whatever aid I might require. I told him it is not aid, that I need but your confidence and cooperation.
>
> By Jinnah's next visit, he was poisoned by British officials and Qayyum Khan, so when he came to NWFP and we approached him for appointment he excused himself on grounds which were not valid. Sensing this we kept aloof from all the functions during the visit. Being invited to government house, I met Jinnah there. He asked me how it was that he had not seen me at any of the receptions arranged for him, thereby implying that we had boycotted his visit and insulted him. I answered that a Fakir by temperament, I felt out of my element in the banquets and receptions of the rich. Thereupon Jinnah remarked that a better course for us would be, in the interest of the country, to merge ourselves with Muslim League. I asked him, 'Do you wish to make use of our services or to render us unfit for any service?' Jinnah: 'Of course, I wish to make use of your services.' I replied 'Then let a *Khudai Khidmatgar* organisation be established with you as its head. It is only through such a body that I can function.' Jinnah: 'But I have told you that I am with you. I shall agree to anything you might propose. Why should you not then be able to function?' I replied, 'I can not work with these people, the Muslim Leaguers.' Jinnah: 'Why not!'
>
> I said, 'They are not sincere, they are self-seekers all, out for a loot.'
>
> Jinnah: 'What is the proof?'
>
> I said, 'Properties worth crores left by Hindus have been appropriated by them. Has any of them offered to surrender their

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> *mal-e-ghanimat* to the public treasury as laid down in the Shariat?' Jinnah exclaimed, 'But surely, all of them do not belong to that category. There must be some exceptions.' I said, 'Yes, those who did not get an opportunity.'[3]

While plunder and loot, which Bacha Khan termed *mal-e-ghanimat* cannot be condoned, it is unfortunate that Bacha Khan tended to see this horrible act in isolation from similar or worse crimes committed by non-Pathans in a fit of frenzy throughout the sub-continent. After all, Mahatma Gandhi's message of non-violence had reached all parts of India. Moreover, plunder and loot were but a minor manifestation of the holocaust which engulfed India, a holocaust which was predicted both by Gandhi and Jinnah, and perpetrated to settle political scores. 'Plunder and loot' was also committed by the Pakhtuns in Kabul, when they re-captured the Kabul throne from Bacha Saqqa. This loot which devastated Kabul followed the Pakhtun victory and the restoration of the Kabul throne, and was celebrated by Bacha Khan at Utmanzai, in 1929. Despite such incidents of plunder a close relationship developed between Bacha Khan and the rulers of Kabul. However, he could not develop even a working relationship with the rulers of Pakistan, because allegedly they carried the stigma of 'plunder and loot'.

On 13 May 1948, Abdul Ghaffar Khan announced that he had decided to extend the *Khudai Khidmatgar* Movement to all provinces of Pakistan, and that they would serve as a voluntary corps to the 'Pakistan Peoples Party,' which he had founded in March 1948, in collaboration with GM Syed of Sindh.

> It was to be a non-communal Movement, inclusive of progressive sections in Pakistan and stood for liberal and democratic ideals. Its aims were stabilisation and security of Pakistan, as a Union of Socialist Republics, drawing its sanctions and authority from people through their willing consent, provision of full and unimpaired autonomy for all, and cultural relations with neighbouring states, particularly with Indian Union.[4]

In the third week of May 1948, Ghaffar Khan presented the programme of the newly formed 'Peoples Party' in the Frontier districts of Peshawar and Mardan and declared:

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I have witnessed the show of [the] Pakistan Constituent Assembly. There is absolutely no difference between Pakistani leaders and the old British bureaucrats. The most plausible argument advanced by them is that the new state is yet in its infancy. I invite them to look to India where the leaders have safely piloted the ship of state despite stormy weather. They have framed their draft constitution, where as nothing has so far been done in Pakistan. The only conclusion that one can draw is that the present leaders of Pakistan are afraid of the democratic set up. The leaders who have their own axe to grind consider Pakistan as their personal *jagir*. It is a pity that all of them are refugees and do not originally belong to Pakistan. . . . Jinnah as Governor-General is not a representative of the Muslim nation. He was appointed by the British King and as such he is responsible to him and not to the nation. I now take this opportunity to bring home to you that Islamic law or the law of Qur'an, as you call it, for which you have been crying so long and for which your dear and near ones have laid their lives would never be enforced in Pakistan. I warn you that you are partners in the State of Pakistan. You are fully entitled to one-fourth share. Unite and act with determination and demolish the sandy walls which the leaders of Pakistan have built around you. We can not tolerate the present state of affairs any longer. Gird up your loins and march towards your goal of freedom for the Pakhtuns, who have already made great sacrifices and suffered untold privations. We will not rest content till we succeed in establishing Pakhtunistan—rule of the Pathan, by the Pathan and for the Pathan.[5]

This was a signal to establish a Free Pakhtunistan. According to Ghaffar Khan's biographer, Tendulkar,

A declaration for a Free Pakhtunistan was followed by the installation of the 'First Pakhtun National Parliament,' under the Presidentship of the Fakir of Ipi. Branches of the 'New State' were set up in Tirah (Afridi Clan) and in Waziristan. Pakhtuns were called upon to owe allegiance to 'Independent Pakhtunistan,' whose flag was hoisted and a 'Declaration of Pakhtunistan National Assembly' was issued, and its copies addressed to all the Pakhtuns in the entire Muslim World, and the United Nations. The 'Declaration of Independence' was simultaneously broadcast over Radio Kabul.[6]

The proclamation of 'Independent Pakhtunistan' by the Fakir

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of Ipi was made in May 1948 to counter the action taken by the Government of Pakistan in April 1948 to formalize the relationship between the tribal areas and State of Pakistan, on the basis of the the oaths of allegiance taken by the *Jirgas*. The call of Abdul Ghaffar Khan at Mardan in May 1948 for the 'Rule of the Pathans, by the Pathans, and for the Pathans,' coincided with the proclamation of 'Independent Pakhtunistan' by the Fakir of Ipi. More significantly, the call also coincided with the Afghanistan government's pressure on Pakistan to sign a treaty declaring the tribal areas as a sovereign state, and allowing an Afghan corridor through Pakistan to the sea. These well-orchestrated moves by Afghanistan, the Fakir of Ipi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan came within three months of the Khan's oath of allegiance to Pakistan, offering his service for social uplift, extending his social service programme to all of Pakistan, and launching a new political party called the 'Pakistan Peoples' Party,' in collaboration with like-minded politicians of Pakistan, including GM Syed of Sindh. Apparently, the call for an independent Pakhtunistan could not be considered a legitimate political activity, but a move to counter the Government action aiming at integrating the tribal areas with the rest of Pakistan. On 5 June 1948, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and his son Wali Khan, were arrested and put on trial. Ghaffar Khan declined to give his defence. He was imprisoned for three years for sedition and collaboration with the Fakir of Ipi.[7]

Although Abdul Ghaffar Khan advised against retaliation, his followers, emotionally charged by the 'Declaration of Independence' courted arrests in large numbers and staged demonstrations against the administration. This resulted in skirmishes with the police and firing incidents in Babra village near Charsadda on 12 August 1948, resulting in loss of human life. The *Khudai Khidmatgars* equated the Babra incident with the massacre at Jalianwalla Bagh in Amritsar.[8]

Since the Kashmir-Pakhtunistan link was no longer a secret, the Pakistan authorities approached Ghaffar Khan on 5 January 1954, in the Rawalpindi Circuit House, where he was in detention, to use his good offices with India in helping resolve the Kashmir problem between India and Pakistan. His response was, 'in case I intervened now, and told Kashmiris to join Pakistan, I might well be asked, "who are you and what about

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yourself? Do you want to take us into detention, which you have suffered yourself?" Kashmir dispute has now become much more complicated than it was six years ago, when I had offered my services for its settlement to the late Jinnah.'[9]

Bacha Khan's offer to Jinnah should be viewed in the context of the following events that took place at the time of partition:

a) Bannu Resolution calling for Independent Pakhtunistan, June 1947.
b) Visits to Kashmir by Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Kirpalani, and the rulers of Patiala, Kapurthala, Nabha and Faridkot to persuade the Maharaja to accede to India.
c) Dismissal of Kashmir's Prime Minister Pandit Premanand Kak who was inclined to accede to Pakistan.
d) Visit of Congress emissary to Kabul.
e) Visit of Abdul Ghaffar Khan to Kabul.
f) Visit of Kabul emissary to Delhi.
g) Kabul laying its claim to Frontier Province.
h) Dr Khan Saheb's embarrassment over Kabul's claim.

After partition, the following events took place:

a) Afghanistan denounced the Durand Line.
b) Afghanistan opposed Pakistan's membership to the United Nations.
c) Delay in announcing the Punjab Boundary Award.
d) Mountbatten manipulating the Boundary Award, to give India territorial access to Kashmir.
e) India manipulates accession of Kashmir.
f) Landing of Indian troops in Kashmir.
g) Sardaryab Resolution, pledging loyalty to Pakistan (September 1947).
h) Bacha Khan taking oath as member of Pakistan Parliament (February 1948).
i) Bacha Khan's meeting with Jinnah (March 1948).
j) Fakir of Ipi declaring Independent Pakhtunistan (May 1948).
k) Bacha Khan's call for 'Rule of the Pathan, by the Pathan, for the Pathan' (May 1948).
l) Hoisting Pakhtunistan flag in Kabul. (May 1948).

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If Bacha Khan made the mediation offer to Jinnah, he must have done so in March 1948. By then Kashmir's annexation to India had been completed. Bacha Khan had been personally involved, directly or indirectly, in the package deal, whereby, India was to reach 'Independent Pakhtunistan' via Kashmir and Afghanistan. The deal was frustrated, not by the oath of allegiance by Bacha Khan, but by the referendum. However, Kashmir was not merely a 'link road' to Pakhtunistan, it had its own geo-strategic importance for India. How could India abandon its strategic interests under friendly persuasion by Bacha Khan? He must have been under a false illusion when he made such a claim. If India could sacrifice Gandhi, and let him die fasting, rather than hand over Pakistan's legitimate share of partition assets and cash balances—how could it part with a strategic territory, bordering China and Soviet Union, as a gesture of goodwill to Bacha Khan? And how could Bacha Khan entertain such illusions after being let down by the Congress leaders at the time of partition? When Bacha Khan's simple request, to agree to a third option in the referendum was turned down by Nehru, when Congress conceded Pakistan without consulting, or even informing him, how could they offer him Kashmir on a silver platter for Jinnah, or even to let it stay independent? The only Indian personality who would have at least heard Bacha Khan with patience was Gandhi, who had been assassinated in January 1948. Who else was Bacha Khan counting on? Even if Gandhi was alive, how could he make any concession on Kashmir to Bacha Khan, when he himself had worked for Kashmir's accession to India? Why would Bacha Khan care to solve the Kashmir problem in 1948, or at any other time, when he himself, along with the Fakir of Ipi and Kabul, was to say good-bye to Pakistan in May 1948? Mediation between India and Pakistan required diplomatic skill of the highest order. Even though Bacha Khan was one of the closest associates and trusted disciples of Gandhi, he failed to learn his great negotiating skill. Gandhi's adversaries knew well that inside his bare body and a frail frame there was a great mind with a deep insight. Unfortunately, Bacha Khan, basically a social reformer, did not probe Gandhi's multi-dimensional personality and learnt only the trappings of *ahimsa*. On complicated and contentious issues, he tended to be carried

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away by emotions, and was unsuited to play a mediatory role between India and Pakistan. Lastly, there was a mutual lack of trust between him and the rulers of Pakistan. This chasm continued to widen from the day the partition was announced till the end of his life.

In the formative years, Pakistan's priority was to stabilize its state apparatus and consolidate its territorial integrity. The exodus of Hindus from Sindh brought trade and commerce to a standstill. The Sikhs had created a state of terror in the Punjab. The Kashmir route to Pakhtunistan had activated Kabul and the Fakir or Ipi. India refused to release Pakistan's share in military hardware and cash balances. The prophets of doom had anticipated that Pakistan would be a still-born baby. They waited to hear the news of its collapse any moment. The princely states, whose rulers used to swear by Jinnah, began to lose faith. The Nawab of Bahawalpur had begun hobnobbing with India through intermediaries. After some dilatory tactics, he finally acceded to Pakistan, on 3 October 1947. The hesitation of Khairpur, Chitral, Dir, Swat and Amb was overcome in the following months. Kalat, Kharan, Makran and Lasbella continued to vacillate. Kalat, which held their leadership, aspired for independence. 'The Khan employed Douglas Fell, an Englishman, as his Foreign Minister, who negotiated with foreign companies for oil prospecting and was possibly, seeking support through them. It was also alleged that Khan's brother and uncle sought aid of Kabul.'[10]

'Quaid-i-Azam thought that the Khan of Kalat was like his son and that Kalat would accede to Pakistan unhesitatingly. But when the partition plan was announced, the Khan's intentions changed. . . . He played a sinister diplomatic game, which included negotiations with Afghanistan, Iran, India and Britain, to explore as to who would guarantee Kalat's independence. He wrote to Iran to say that Kalat had traditionally been a part of Iran and that he desired old Iran-Kalat ties to be re-established. Simultaneously, he approached Afghanistan, using the good offices of his Begum who was King Zahir Shah's first cousin. Also he sent a mission to India under the leadership of Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, offering Kalat to be a part of India. The mission was unable to meet Nehru and Patel but they were able to meet Maulana Azad. They requested him to get them

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an interview with Nehru and Patel, so they could offer them Kalat's accession. Maulana told them, "you people have lost your heads. Your country has been established. Now go back and join that country without fuss. What is all this foolish talk?" Accordingly, the Bizenjo Mission, disappointed, returned home.'[11]

'The Iranians also ignored the Khan. Kabul kept the talks going, and, occasionally, sent assistance to the Khan as well. After sometime, when there was some disturbance in Kalat, the Khan's younger brother, Prince Abdul Karim escaped to Kabul. Likewise, the Khan told Britain that Kalat was a part of the British Empire. When the Khan found his doors shut to India, Kabul, and Iran, he called a *Jirga* of all his tribal chiefs, and declared that Kalat was an independent country. During the Friday sermon, the Khan pronounced Kalat's independence. He constituted a Parliament, comprising an Upper House and a Lower House. In a pincer diplomatic move, Pakistan won over the accession of Makran, Kharan and Lasbella, thereby cutting off Kalat's physical access to the rest of the world. Unnerved and non-plussed the Khan announced his unconditional accession to Pakistan. Prince Abdul Karim rebelled but his rebellion was crushed.'[12]

While there may or may not have been a direct link between the movements for independent Pakhtunistan and independent Balochistan, some common factors were there: both had links with Kabul, both made approaches to India and both declared independence. Against this background, Pakistan had to deal with the leaders of these movements to prove their bonafides, not through their oaths and speeches, but through their actions.

In March 1954, Badshah Khan was permitted to attend the budget session of the Pakistan Parliament. He made his memorable speech in which he renewed his pledge of loyalty to Pakistan, regretted that his loyalty was still suspect in the eyes of the leaders of Pakistan, and asserted that it was his struggle for independence that led to the formation of Pakistan. He declared that in case his loyalty was still suspected, a judicial tribunal should be appointed to decide the question, provided the tribunal also enquired into the massacre at Charsadda and the shabby treatment meted out to him in jail. He advised that the State of Pakistan should be built on trust and confidence, and mutual respect for rights, interests and distinctive features

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of various units. He repeated his old suggestion that the Muslim League should be disbanded, and in its place, political parties established on socio-economic basis. He reminded the Assembly of the total defeat of the Muslim League in East Bengal as proof of his contention. He condemned the dismissal of the Fazlul Haq ministry in East Pakistan, and equated it to the dismissal of Khan Saheb's ministry in the NWFP in 1947.[13]

In the same speech, the Khan condemned the allegations of a secessionist movement in East Pakistan and added that he had assurances from Fazlul Haq, Bhashani and Suhrawardy to that effect. As against that, he cited the malicious propaganda in the Karachi press and in public meetings, which were creating a gulf between Bengalis and non-Bengalis.[14]

In 1954, Badshah Khan was interviewed by James W Spain, the author of *Ways of the Pathans* who asked him whether he wanted freedom within or outside Pakistan. Badshah Khan responded, 'This is a matter of no importance. What matters is that we be free to develop ourselves, to tear down our own Khans who have oppressed us, to make our own laws, and to speak our own language. For this they say, I am an agent of Afghanistan. They call me traitor. It is false. . . .'[15]

In September 1954, in an attempt to solve the constitutional dilemma, the government decided to amalgamate the provinces of West Pakistan into a single province—one unit. The step was designed to create a parity of representation in the Parliament between East Pakistan and West Pakistan. A verdict in favour of one-unit was manoeuvred in the four Provincial Assemblies, which formed the amalgamated West Pakistan Provincial Assembly. Dr Khan Saheb was won over to support the move, whereupon, he became the Chief Minister of West Pakistan. Abdul Ghaffar Khan opposed one-unit, and called for people's verdict in fresh elections on this issue. He prophesied that forced integration would bring disintegration, and that the existence and promotion of cultural and linguistic entities did not militate against unity.

In July 1955, the ban on Badshah Khan's entry into the Frontier was lifted which enabled him to tour the province. He elaborated his concept of Pakhtunistan, which he assured would be an integral part of Pakistan. His brother Dr Khan Saheb, and Pakistan's Interior Minister, Iskandar Mirza, tried

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to convince him of the merits of one-unit, but in vain. Later, on 26 July 1955, Iskandar Mirza, in a press conference, accused Badshah Khan of 'Undermining the establishment of a strong and stable Pakistan.'[16] Badshah Khan started his anti-one-unit campaign. On 29 July 1955, he held a joint meeting of the Frontier Awami League and *Khudai Khidmatgars*, at Manki Sharif, in which the participants decided to resist the one-unit scheme. On 16 September he began his campaign in Balochistan where his entry was banned. He was arrested but released on 26 September. He campaigned in Karachi, Punjab, Bengal and the Frontier. On 16 June 1956, he was arrested in Shahi Bagh, and put on trial on 3 September in the West Pakistan High Court, on charges of inciting Pathans to violence and justifying murders for securing Pakhtunistan. Unlike 1948, this time he decided to plead his case. In his defence he said: ' . . . Liaqat Ali Khan . . . said that after the death of Quaid-i-Azam, he did not want any other leader who could sway the masses. . . . We are true Pakistanis. The Pakhtuns are scattered in various areas and restrictions are imposed on our movement and free association. . . . Strong Pakistan can not be established as long as Pakhtuns are divided and scattered. . . . I agreed (with Choudhry Mohammed Ali, Finance Minister) to head the administration of village uplift in Pakistan provided one-unit issue was settled justly first. . . . We dispersed without reaching any settlement.'[17]

On 24 January 1957, the High Court sentenced Badshah Khan to imprisonment till the rising of the Court. On 27 January 1957, he joined the Pakistan National Party, formed by the merger of six opposition parties, and demanded the creation of a zonal federation on a linguistic basis in West Pakistan. In September 1957, the West Pakistan Assembly adopted a resolution to dismember one-unit. Earlier, on 7 July 1957, Dr Khan Saheb was dismissed as Chief Minister. He was murdered on 8 May 1958. Badshah Khan commented that Dr Khan Saheb's murder had greatly accentuated the feeling of hatred between the Pathans and the Punjabis, and if this trend persisted, it would make it difficult for the two to co-exist.

In 1958, Badshah Khan published a pamphlet in Pashtu, revealing a 'secret plot,' behind the one-unit scheme. The pamphlet said,[18]

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> . . . First we must achieve political power and for that we must put an end to all opposition so that all obstacles in our way are cleared. We must create an atmosphere so that people will hear only our voice and this is possible only if we use our power ruthlessly . . . any hesitation . . . will come in the way of achieving real political power . . . we should have our men in every province and should . . . invest them with full powers . . . take a lesson from Khairpur Assembly which rejected one-unit . . . never trust provincial assemblies . . . after drafting the proposal ourselves, get it adopted by them under our whip. . . . We must utilise *mullahs* . . . be cautious so that while doing so they do not establish their own supremacy . . . recruit only mercenary *mullahs* . . . remember for this work we have able and dependable workers only in Punjab. . . . Punjabi leadership should . . . take full advantage . . . at the opportune time . . . it should be made clear that Centre, and not Punjab, wants one-unit . . . People like Ghulam Ali Talpur should be given no opportunity to oppose our plan . . . everything has gone wrong in Frontier . . . in Qayyum's place greater power has emerged. . . . The formidable Red Shirts. We can never win over Abdul Ghaffar Khan nor trust him. . . . Some people mistakenly give more political influence to Dr Khan Saheb. . . . If they are separated, Abdul Ghaffar Khan will retain his position. Dr Khan Saheb will pass into eclipse. . . . Our parleys with Abdul Ghaffar Khan will enhance his political influence . . . none of us can equal him in political acumen. . . . Punjab has to keep mute at this juncture. . . . They will be more effective when educated people of the Punjab will be at the helm of affairs in the Centre as well as in Lahore. . . . In Sindh and Frontier some people have to be bribed with ministerial and diplomatic posts. Otherwise they will oppose one-unit in fear of endangering their careers. . . . As soon as West Pakistan leadership gets one-unit approved, they should at once take power and start negotiations with Bengal. . . . Suhrawardy is ambitious. . . . Our bargain with him is not so costly. . . .

Abdul Ghaffar Khan did not disclose the source of the above 'diabolical plot' but condemned the intrigue, bribery and other foul means used to achieve one-unit. What he really seemed to condemn was the deceitful and dictatorial manner in which one-unit was created and the Provincial Assemblies were bulldozed into accepting it. Had it been set up by democratic means, he would have probably supported it, even if it may have resulted in Punjabi domination. Once he had calmed down

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the Bengali Muslims, who feared Bengali Hindu domination after independence, by saying that slavery under blacks was better than slavery under whites.

Following the military coup staged by General Ayub Khan, a Pakhtun General, Abdul Ghaffar Khan was arrested, but later released, on 4 April 1959, on grounds of his old age and failing health. However, he was disqualified from being a member of any elective body—a punishment given to scores of other politicians under the Public Officers' Disqualification Order, promulgated under Martial Law, to eliminate leaders from the political arena till 1966. On 12 April 1961, he was arrested in Dera Ismail Khan and detained in jail. In a press conference, President Ayub Khan explained, 'Abdul Ghaffar Khan wanted the Frontier to become a part of India. Having failed in this venture, he demanded a separate province in Pakistan, where he wanted to be the king. Later, he wanted to make the Frontier a part of Afghanistan.' In December 1962, Amnesty International demanded his release, and declared him 'Prisoner of the Year.' In May 1963, Abdul Wali Khan revealed that about three thousand followers of his father were 'rotting in detention camps and their properties worth crores of rupees had been confiscated.' In January 1964, Badshah Khan's health deteriorated and he was released, but kept under house arrest. In September 1964, he travelled to the UK for treatment. He wished to go to the USA but a visa was refused, allegedly, under the Pakistan government's influence.[19] The government allegedly stopped him from going to Kabul as well but he managed to get a visa from the Afghan Embassy in Cairo, which finally enabled him to reach Kabul.

President Ayub Khan initiated a diplomatic drive to settle the Pakhtunistan issue. A dialogue had been established with Kabul through Iran's mediation. That gave Ayub Khan breathing time, which he devoted to industrial development and the creation of new economic opportunities for the Pathans, particularly those living in the tribal belt. Customs regulations were softened on the cross-border trade. Almost overnight the fortunes of the Pathans changed. Whole-sale and retail business flourished, transport of goods—monopolised by the Pathans—expanded rapidly. Sprawling Pathan settlements sprang up in Karachi and Hyderabad to house hundreds of thousands of

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Pathans who moved in to work as transporters, contractors, construction workers, industrial workers, retailers, watchmen, drivers, etc. They moved up the economic ladder fast leaving almost every other community behind. With economic clout, they acquired political clout, far beyond the traditional Pakhtun homelands. The Durand Line, which had always remained an open border for the tribals, became more open. Poverty began to give way to prosperity. Pakhtunistan was rendered redundant politically. The concept was overtaken by the prospect of a Pakhtun Economic Community.

Badshah Khan stayed on in Kabul, in the mid sixties, in a state of desperation. During this period, he planned a tribal invasion against Pakistan, as revealed by him to Pyrelal, but an unrelated accident of history willed otherwise. In 1965, a war broke out between India and Pakistan. This unexpected development necessitated a reappraisal of the strategy in Kabul. The Afghan king was compelled to exercise caution in choosing his options. A defeated Pakistan would, in all probability, tempt India, to expand its influence up to the Hindu Kush. For a while, Kabul began to see Pakistan as a force which could prevent the tidal flow across the Khyber Pass in a reverse direction—from Delhi to Kabul! The people of Afghanistan would never support a hostile move by Kabul against Pakistan if it meant strategic advantage for India. This kinship between the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan had deep roots in history. Accordingly, Kabul adopted a neutral policy during the Indo-Pakistan War. Pak-Afghanistan tension had also been eased by Iranian mediation.

In 1968, another Pakhtun General, Yahya Khan, replaced Ayub Khan. He too, took some steps which had a direct bearing on Pakhtunistan. Yahya Khan disbanded one-unit and restored all the four provinces; he abolished the princely states of Dir, Swat, Chitral and Amb, and merged them with the NWFP, thereby enlarging the territorial, political and socio-economic base of the province. Moreover, he held general elections in 1970, which strengthened the Pathans' sense of participation in the affairs of their province and their country.

The National Awami Party (NAP) founded by Bacha Khan, now led by Wali Khan, fully participated in the general elections in 1970 and, when elected governments were formed, the NAP

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formed the provincial government in Balochistan, joined in a coalition with the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI) in the Frontier, and sat in opposition in the Federal Parliament. It participated in the framing of Pakistan's first democratic constitution in 1973. But soon thereafter, its relations with the Pakistan Peoples' Party government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto deteriorated. The main point of confrontation was the issue of the centre's handling of the situation in Balochistan. The NAP government of Balochistan, headed by Chief Minister Ataullah Khan Mengal was dismissed. In protest, the NAP-supported government of the NWFP, headed by Mufti Mahmood (JUI) resigned. This was followed by insurgency and military action in Balochistan. The process of democracy received severe jolts during the five years of the Bhutto government. Bomb explosions in the Frontier and elsewhere became common features. A powerful bomb exploded in WAPDA House in Lahore which shook the Punjab.

> Police had no expertise . . . army experts told us to locate the device pin left behind after the explosion. . . . By chance the device pin was located from the debris. It had Russian markings, which gave the clue that this explosion was engineered by the NAP. This was followed by other explosions, including the one at the railway station. . . . Likewise three to four bombs were planted on the TV booster in Murree but only one exploded with minor damage. One bomb was planted on electric sub-station in Islamabad but that one did not explode and we got it intact, which gave us clues as to their origin. . . . when NAP people were hauled up in the Frontier, the explosions in the Punjab stopped. I have heard that one boy named Bismillah Kakar hailing from Balochistan, studying in Lahore Veterinary College had placed the bomb at WAPDA House. Subsequently, some explosions occurred in Balochistan. Then that boy escaped into Afghanistan, which ended the explosions in Balochistan. . . . NAP was involved on the basis of [the] same origin of bombs placed in the Frontier and Punjab, and their stoppage after the NAP men were hauled up. This was the basis of the charge against the NAP. The bombs must have been brought from Afghanistan. Ajmal Khattak was sitting in Kabul. He was training them (the saboteurs) and supplying them the bombs, which were used against Pakistan. Frontier police traced the entire net-work of these saboteurs and submitted an enquiry report. All the restrictions on the NAP were placed on account of their anti-state activities, as revealed in the investigation. When the Frontier police unearthed the whole net-work of sabotage and

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cracked down on the men behind it, the explosions in other places also stopped.[20]

Ajmal Khattak, in his book *Bullet For Bullet*, has corroborated Rao Rashid's version by owning acts of sabotage, including bomb blasts at Mardan telephone exchange, Premier Tobacco Company and in Swabi. Thus, in a country like Pakistan, where the concept of nationalism was in 1973, still in a nascent stage, judging people or parties on issues such as loyalty, patriotism, rebellion, insurgency, was premature. The final verdict must therefore be left to history, which must take note of the objective conditions prevailing at that time. The Pakhtunistan issue may have been stalled, but it was not yet dead. Pakistan had not yet fully recovered from the shock of the secession of its eastern half. Tribalism was still deep-rooted in the border provinces. Where British military expeditions had failed, how could the Pakistan army contemplate even limited action and still call itself a national army? However, the lessons of the East Pakistan debacle were soon forgotten.

GM Syed, the veteran leader of the Sindhi nationalist movement (Jiye-Sindh) has provided a thought-provoking insight into the issues pertaining to Pakistan's integration on the eve of the secession of East Pakistan. In an interview, he recalls that when he realised that East Pakistan might be driven to separation, he consulted Nawab Akbar Bugti and Sardar Ataullah Mengal, and then flew to Peshawar to consult Wali Khan to work out a joint strategy to prevent disintegration. But Syed was surprised by Wali Khan who told him that he did not agree to Shaikh Mujibur Rahman's 'Six Points' (i.e. demand for autonomy), that if the power of taxation was given to the provinces, then most of the taxes from East Pakistan and Sindh would not be available to the NWFP, and that if the NWFP did not get part of these taxes, then the Pathans would suffer economically. Syed was shocked and asked Wali Khan: 'do you mean to say that we should pay the taxes and you and Punjabis should benefit?' Whereupon, Wali Khan responded: 'this was the reality, since we and the Punjabis do the fighting for the army.' Syed came to the conclusion that 'Punjabis and Pathans were chips of the same block and that Wali Khan was hand and glove with the Punjabis; that

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he was out only to get some share in the loot of Pakistan'. Syed further quotes Wali Khan, 'the Punjabis are compelled to recognize the Frontier's authority. . . . I cast my die with the Punjabis. . . . We have no outlet to the sea.' Finally, Syed recalls Abdul Ghaffar Khan's own assessment of his son, 'my son Wali Khan does not represent me. All he wants is some job or some portion from the Punjabis and he will remain in Pakistan satisfied, adding that Abdul Ghaffar Khan himself believed that Pakistan must be broken up into independent states.'[21] If Wali Khan has been quoted correctly, then without doubt, he is a pragmatic politician par excellence. He seemed to have realized the absurdity of Pakhtun national sovereignty, which would have been self-defeating and counter-productive.

In 1991, the political scene in Pakistan had changed radically. All the actors in the play had either disappeared from the scene or changed their positions. The Awami National Party (ANP—the new name of NAP) had fully participated in the political process and formed working coalitions with parties, which were once dubbed 'Mullahs and British stooges,' namely the Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami, etc. To its foreign backers, Pakhtunistan became a non-issue. Afghanistan, India and the USSR had their own problems. Besides they knew that Pakistani Pakhtuns were better off politically and economically than their counterparts and kinsmen outside Pakistan.

The Pakhtuns, however, felt aggrieved at the geographical label of 'Frontier' sticking to their province. When Pakistan's first democratic constitution was unanimously passed in 1973, no demand was made to rename the province, owing to the legacy of acrimony and the stigma attached to the name 'Pakhtunistan.' In 1988, the ANP wanted to move a resolution in the Frontier Assembly to rename the Frontier as *Pakhtun Khwa*—an alternative which did not carry any negative connotations, it has been used in old Pushto literature, and reflects the ethnic and linguistic identity of the province. However, the Speaker ruled that the Members were free to call their province whatever they liked, and the ANP did not press the resolution. In 1990-91, the issue was raised again by the ANP in the Provincial Assembly, but the move was rejected by its coalition partners—the Muslim League and Jamaat-e-Islami. The latter proposed alternatives like *Islam*

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Khwa or *Nooristan*. The Muslim League has greater support in the non-Pakhtun belt of Hazara. Besides all of Chitral and half of Dera Ismail Khan division are non-Pakhtun. Even in the cities of Peshawar and Kohat, Pushto is not the dominant language.[22]

A number of alternative names have been suggested, like Gandhara, (old name for Peshawar valley, meaning the 'land of fragrance'), Abasin—a Pushto name for the Indus, and Khyber. But the name ultimately chosen will be the one which appeals to the Pakhtuns, who will adopt it through democratic means, sooner or later. If controversy had not been raised and the territorial integrity of Pakistan not questioned, the NWFP would have had the name of its own choice as far back as in 1947. What is more, there could have been a positive move towards the reconstitution of a linguistic Pakhtun province, and the annulment of the administrative arrangement carried out by Viceroy Lord Curzon in 1901 to split the Pakhtuns.[23] But today, the geographical map of the Pakhtun homeland has changed. There are millions of Pakhtuns living in Sindh, where they are aspiring for their political representation. If Badshah Khan did not foresee this phase of history, Wali Khan did so admirably well. Politically awakened Pakhtuns now want an effective say in the affairs of all the provinces, including Frontier, Balochistan, Sindh, and if possible, Punjab too, besides at the federal level. The demand for an independent Pakhtunistan, re-interpreted as a linguistic reconstitution of the Pakhtun homelands, has thus been overtaken by history.

NOTES

1. Tendulkar, D G, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan — Faith is a Battle*, pp. 450-1.
2. Ibid., p. 451.
3. Ibid., p. 462.
4. Ibid., p. 463.
5. Ibid., pp. 464, 465.
6. Ibid., p. 470.
7. Ibid., p. 465.
8. Ibid., p. 466.
9. Ibid., p. 476.
10. Kardar, A H, *Pakistan Soldiers of Fortune*, p. 238.
11. Rashid, Rao, *Jo Main Ne Dekha*, p. 28.

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12. Ibid., p. 28.
13. Tendulkar, D G, op. cit., p. 478.
14. Ibid., pp. 479, 480.
15. Ibid., p. 481.
16. Ibid., p. 488.
17. Ibid., p. 491, 503.
18. Ibid., pp. 506, 513.
19. Ibid., p. 521.
20. Rao Rashid, op. cit., pp. 174, 175.
21. Syed, G M, Interviewed by Zaffar Abbas, *The Herald*, Karachi, August 1989
22. Ghazali Abdus Sattar, 'NWFP in Search of a Name,' *Dawn*, 2 February 1991.
23. Ibid.

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11

Pakhtunistan–Indo-Afghan Factor

The leadership in Pakistan continued to mistrust Abdul Ghaffar Khan, despite his oath of allegiance and repeated assurances. This lack of confidence had roots too deep to be removed by verbal assurances, specially since assurances were later contradicted by actions. At the time of the referendum he had called for total independence. While declaring allegiance to Pakistan at the Sardaryab meeting, he did not withdraw the demand for total independence made two months earlier at Bannu. In February 1948, in the Constituent Assembly he spoke of an autonomous Pakhtun province. In Mardan in May 1948, he once again demanded a free and independent Pakhtunistan. Nehru's allusions that Pakhtunistan could join India at a subsequent stage, as a result of developments in Kashmir and Afghanistan, and the Congress emissary's visit to Kabul to seek support for the Khan brothers' campaign for an independent Pakhtunistan, could not be ignored by the Pakistani leadership. Had India managed to reach Hunza, Gilgit and Nagar, after it occupied the valley of Kashmir and Ladakh, its next goal could have been to establish Pakhtunistan under the patronage of India and Afghanistan. Moves made by Afghanistan in that direction did indeed strengthen Pakistan's apprehensions, and shake its confidence in the assurances given by Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Following the Congress manoeuvres, the Afghan government sent a note to the British government, demanding, among other things, that the referendum in the NWFP should include the option of an independent Pathan State.[1] On 21 June 1947, the Afghan Prime Minister, Mohamed Hashim Khan, in an interview

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in Bombay said, 'if an independent Pakhtunistan can not be set up, the Frontier Province should join Afghanistan. Our neighbour (Pakistan) will realize that we need an outlet to the sea . . . '[2] Apparently, Bombay was chosen for making an anti-Pakistan statement so as to inflame Indian public opinion, which had already reached a boiling point over the partition issue. On 30 September 1947, the Afghan delegate at the United Nations opposed Pakistan's membership to the United Nations, on the grounds that his country could not recognize NWFP as part of Pakistan, so long as the people of that province were not given an opportunity, free from any kind of influence, to determine whether they wished to be independent or to be a part of Pakistan (or India).

In 1948, Najibullah Khan visited Pakistan as the Afghan King's personal envoy to negotiate a treaty of friendship. On his return to Kabul, he announced that he had made three demands, namely: a) the tribal areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan should be constituted into a sovereign province, b) Pakistan must give Afghanistan access to the sea, either by creation of an Afghan corridor in West Balochistan or by allotting a 'free Afghan Zone' in Karachi, and c) Afghanistan and Pakistan should enter into a treaty which should permit either party to remain neutral in case the other party was attacked. The last condition anticipated an attack on Pakistan by India.[3]

On 13 June 1948, Marshal Wali Khan, the Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan spoke to the Aligarh Old Boys' Association in Karachi, 'Our King has already stated, and I, as his representative, declare that Afghanistan has no claims on the Frontier territory and, even if there were any, they have been given up in favour of Pakistan. Anything contrary to this, which may have appeared in the press, or may appear in future, should not be given credence at all, and should be considered just a canard.'[4] But the Ambassador's assurance was nullified by statements in the government controlled newspaper *Anis* and on Kabul Radio, demanding that the territory between the Durand Line and the Indus river be amalgamated with Afghanistan.[5] The Ambassador was further humiliated; he was recalled forthwith and the Afghan embassy in Pakistan remained without a senior diplomat for a long time.[6] In July 1949, the Afghan

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Parliament declared that 'it does not recognize the Durand Line; Radio Kabul and the Afghan press incited the tribesmen on the Pakistan side of the Durand Line to revolt in the name of Pakhtunistan. Earlier, the Afghan government had installed a 'Pakhtunistan Government' at Tirah in the borderland, headed by Haji Mirza Ali Khan, better known as the 'Fakir of Ipi.'[7] These developments coincided with the call by Abdul Ghaffar Khan for an independent state of the Pakhtuns, by the Pakhtuns and for the Pakhtuns.

In August 1950, the Afghan King and the Afghan Prime Minister held a *Jashan-e-Pakhunistan* at which a Pakhtunistan flag was hoisted, leaflets inciting the Pakhtuns were dropped over Pakhtun homelands in Pakistan by the Afghan air force. This was followed, on 30 September 1950, by Afghan raids, in the Frontier region.[8]

Afghanistan's own position on Pakhtunistan varied from time to time. On 30 May 1947, King Zahir Shah stated that his government was considering the revision of its boundary with the Soviet Union. In the event of India's independence, with or without partition, the Durand Line, established under a 1893 treaty, as a border between Afghanistan and British India, was to be legally inherited by the successor government on the east of the Durand Line. Thus, while speaking about redefining Afghanistan's border with the Soviet Union, only four days before the announcement of India's independence, the King made no mention of his intention to move for the revision of the Durand Line. Not that any such mention would have made any difference to the international treaty. However, the thought, was apparently planted in his mind by those east of the Khyber, tempting the King to support Pakhtunistan, and use it as a convenient ploy to denounce the treaty of 1893. Kabul's untenable position was amply demonstrated by its changing positions to please more than one masters—the Soviets, the Indians, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Fakir or Ipi, and the over-ambitious Afghan intellectuals. At one time, Kabul demanded an outright annexation of large territories from Khyber, through Dera Ghazi Khan, and from Gilgit and Chitral to the Arabian Sea, including Karachi. The Kabul journal *Anis* published a map in 1951, showing the boundaries of Pakhtunistan, including Chitral, NWFP, the Pathan areas of Balochistan, up to the Indus,

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but excluding the Pushto speaking areas within Afghanistan![9] This map, reflecting Kabul's official stance, did not fit into Abdul Ghaffar Khan's original plan of Pan-Pakhtunism, which not only absorbed the Pakhtun areas of Pakistan, but encircled all of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's unilateral denunciation of the border treaty upset the British government. On 30 June 1950, the Secretary of State stated in the House of Commons, 'In HM's Government's view, Pakistan is, in International Law, the inheritor of the rights and duties of the old government of India, and HM's Government in the UK in these territories, and that, the Durand Line is the International Frontier.' In 1956, Sir Anthony Eden, the British Prime Minister stated, 'In 1947 Pakistan came into existence as a new sovereign independent member of the Commonwealth. The British Government regard her as having, with full consent of the overwhelming majority of the Pushto speaking peoples concerned, both in the administered and non-administered areas, succeeded to the exercise of the powers formally exercised by the Crown in the Indian North-West Frontier of the sub-continent.'[10]

Wali Khan considers the position taken by the British government as double-faced. He says that when the Japanese bombarded Calcutta, the British were alarmed and proposed that Afghanistan should demand the territories ceded in 1893. Following the defeat of Germany and Japan, they changed their position. Russia's victory meant the continuation of communist threat, hence the need for maintaining the Durand Line. He concludes that the British concern for the sovereignty of Pakistan was a camouflage for reducing Afghanistan to the status of a buffer state, so that the British could pursue their old anti-Russia policy by using Pakistan as a front. He goes on to argue that the Muslim League had no right to inherit power as a successor authority, because it had never fought for freedom, and that the League's claim to being a successor authority rested on the premise that the Leaguers are products of the British.[11] Wali Khan has not quoted any source in support of his theory. The source could be the KGB, the Kabul regime or even British intelligence; however, since the source has not been identified only circumstantial evidence can be relied upon. It should be noted that the British determination to repulse

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the enemy remained firm even when London was destroyed by German bombings. One bomb over Calcutta could not have created panic in the Allied ranks. When the Congress orchestrated its Quit-India Movement with Japanese advance in the Far-East, the British succeeded in crushing the movement. But if the British, backed by its Allies, could not stop the Japanese advance to India, the Afghan King could hardly do so. If the Durand Line could be expected to become negotiable under Japanese threat, then it could be claimed that the Congress Quit-India Movement was an act of sabotage against India itself, as a shaky treaty would have deprived a free India of its most strategic territory and its best fighting manpower inhabiting the territory between the Indus and the Durand Line. If Russia was a menace, it was a menace in any form, whether as a Russian Empire, a communist giant, a military superpower, an enemy power, or even as a friendly power.

The buffer status of Afghanistan was conferred on it by the fact of its own geography — British treaties and manipulations notwithstanding. No nation on the Russian border felt safe in physical terms. The Durand Line, along with the territory bounded by it, was, is, and will continue to be, inherited by the people living in that territory, irrespective of their political persuasion and pedigree. On behalf and with the consent of these people, the charge of the Durand Line was taken over by the government of Pakistan. Political parties come and go, but people do not. Ironically, Wali Khan's party has had a rewarding coalition arrangement since 1990-91 with the party which, in his view, was a child of the British.

The Pakhtunistan issue had been internationalised by the geostrategic importance of the Durand Line, which was played up by Kabul and encouraged by India and the Soviet Union. The thoughts expressed by Bacha Khan on the Pakistan side were merely an echo of what was expressed in Kabul, Moscow and Delhi. Soviet writers and experts carried out an ideological campaign to the effect that Pakhtuns were a separate nation and the partition of India did not solve the national problem of the area constituting Pakistan. The Soviet Union viewed the Pakhtunistan issue as a product of the imperialist policy of divide and rule.[12]

When the Soviet writers declared the Pakhtuns to be a

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separate nation on the basis of their ethnic identity, they lost sight of the fact that they were undermining the territorial integrity of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union itself. Within Afghanistan, the formidable Hindu Kush mountain range is not only a geographical divide, but also an ethnic divide, splitting Afghanistan into two distinct ethnic groups. The north-west of the Hindu Kush is inhabited mainly by peoples of Tajik and Uzbek-Turkmen stock, while the south-east is predominantly Pakhtun. The Tajik and Uzbek areas are also contiguous with the ethnically corresponding Central Asian Republics. The Pakhtuns have traditionally dominated Afghanistan much to the resentment of other ethnic groups. The power struggle in Afghanistan since the Saur Revolution (1978) has been a Pakhtun affair. Once the present conflict is sorted out, the Tajiks, the Uzbeks and the Turkmen in the north could agitate to merge with their kinsmen in the corresponding Central Asian Republics, which now enjoy a greater degree of autonomy since the collapse of Soviet communism in 1991. Once such a movement begins, it may be difficult for the Pakhtuns to stop it, after having been exhausted by a debilitating civil war since 1979.

When Bacha Khan launched his Pan-Pakhtunism (1929) and revived his struggle for Pakhtunistan (1947), he created a gulf between Pakhtuns and non-Pakhtuns, not only in Pakistan but also in Afghanistan. On the Pakistani side, the Pakhtuns themselves saw the dangerous implications of Bacha Khan's scheme, nipped it in the bud and, in the process, set an example for the Pakhtuns of Afghanistan. How the latter solve this problem, after the remnants of the Saur Revolution are wiped out, depends on the political awareness of the Pakhtuns in Afghanistan, the system of government they finally establish in Kabul and the manner in which they conduct their relations with neighbours. With Pakistan they share a common heritage. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan have received much of their cultural inspiration from Central Asia, and are peopled, in part, by the remnants of invaders from that area. In certain ways both countries are a cultural extension of Central Asia. This community, extending from the Aral sea to the Arabian sea, has much to gain by widening the scope of cultural and historical ties to include economic, scientific and technological co-operation. But that can happen only if the ethnic diversities

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projected in ideas such as Pakhtunistan are not revived and played up to sub-divide this community.

In 1955, the Kabul authorities reacted against the merger of the West Pakistan provinces into one-unit, terming it an 'anti-Pakhtun' move. Mobs attacked Pakistan Missions in Kabul, Jalalabad and Kandhar; they desecrated the Pakistan flag and damaged Pakistan property. The Soviet Union supported Afghan action. This led to the severance of diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. The Kabul regime ordered general mobilization but an armed conflict was averted because of restraint shown by Pakistan.[13] In 1956, diplomatic relations were restored and high-level visits were exchanged through Turkish mediation. But relations between the two countries deteriorated once again in 1960, when Nikita Khrushchev, during his visit to Kabul, announced Soviet support to Pakhtunistan.[14] This was followed by an Indian statement on 17 September 1961, casting doubts on the validity of the Durand Line. The Indo-Russian encouragement led to the invasion of Pakistan territory by Afghan *lashkars* on 19-21 May 1961, in Bajaur area, seventy miles north of Peshawar. Following the resignation of Prime Minister Sardar Daud, and mediation by the Shah of Iran, an accord was signed in Teheran on 30 May 1963; diplomatic relations were re-established, and tensions were eased.

In December 1964, Abdul Ghaffar Khan visited Kabul and what happened during and in consequence of his visit, raised expectations among his followers of a tribal invasion of Pakistan's territory. He was received at the Kabul airport by the Prime Minister, with his full cabinet, and greeted with the slogans of 'Fakhr-e-Afghan Zindabad' and 'Pakhtunistan Zindabad.' From Kabul he wrote letters to Pyarelal and Vinoba Bhave. To Bhave he wrote, 'In the last eighteen years since Pakistan came into being, I have been behind bars for fifteen years, mostly in solitary confinement—with taunts and insults from those who were my wardens.'[15] In July, 1965, Bhave sent Pyarelal to Kabul from where he wrote back. '. . . Since Badshah Khan's arrival in Kabul Pakistan Ambassador has been trying to lure him back to Pakistan, promising him all sorts of things. But he has seen through their deceit. He is not walking into their trap. He is not going to Pakistan, where only lingering death in prison awaits him.

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'He repeated several times during my stay with him that they could have had their Pakhtunistan and anything for the Pakhtuns if they had only accepted the partition plan. Before partition, at the time of partition, and also after partition, the British Government, Jinnah and the members of Pakistan government, including Liaquat Ali, Ghulam Mohammed, and Iskandar Mirza, had in turn made tempting offers to him, if only he would compromise with his cherished convictions in respect of nationalism and repudiate his association with the Indian National Congress and the national struggle, and join hands with the Muslim League. He had refused. At the time of partition, Gandhiji had told him that independent India would not hesitate to come to their help if they were oppressed. That promise had not been kept. Gandhiji would never have let this happen, if he had lived. India owed it to them and to Gandhiji to make *kafara* (expiation) for it.

'I asked him whether he was sure that the Afghan government's conception of Pakhtunistan was the same as his or merely they wanted a revision of [the] Durand Line. Alluding to the fact that it was the Pathans who had got Nadir Shah, the father of the present ruler, his throne, it was simply a question of *noblesse oblige*. "We went to their aid when they were in distress; we expect them to come to ours, now that we are in distress."

'Giving expression to a lurking fear in my mind I asked him whether, if India espoused his cause, would it not harm him personally, would it not ruin whatever chance there was of a reconciliation between him and the Pakistan government? He replied, so far he personally was concerned, he had burnt his boats. As for the prospect of reconciliation with Pakistan, it was practically nil. He had tried every means, he said. The conclusion that has been forced upon him was that Pakistan is incorrigible. By way of illustration, he said that even if India were to offer not one but half a dozen Kashmirs, India would find that peace would not be established with Pakistan. His faith had been completely shattered. He wished to have nothing whatsoever to do with Pakistan. He would do or die — either achieve Pakhtunistan or die fighting for it.

"Are the means ready? Is the prospect hopeful?" I asked. "They were not only ready." he replied, "but impatient. Their

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response was greater and more spontaneous than anything (he had) ever experienced under the British rule." He said, "There was not time enough for this." The situation that confronted him called for immediate action. He had to act with whatever sources he had in readiness. If he hesitated, the Pakhtuns might get out of hand and do something desperate. To avert such a tragedy he must take a calculated risk. He could not allow his people to die crushed, demoralized and reduced to abject submission for ever. They had not fought the British to exchange one slavery for another.

'I asked Badshah Khan if he would come to India. He answered: Yes, but not for sightseeing. Only, if India made the Pakhtun issue her own to redeem Gandhi's pledge. "If India and Afghanistan co-operated with us, the Pakhtunistan question could be settled, without any outside help, and without fighting." I asked him, in what way could India help. He said: by putting upon those concerned all the moral, economic and diplomatic pressure that India was capable of. India was honour-bound by virtue of the solemn pledge that Gandhiji had given them at the time of partition to do for them all that she could do in an issue of vital concern to herself.'[16]

On 31 August 1965, Pyarelal attended the Pakhtunistan Day celebration, at which the Mayor of Kabul said that every year the Afghan government celebrated the Day and that it would continue to support the cause of its Pakhtun brothers until they achieved their independence. Those attending the celebration included the Afghan Cabinet and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The ceremony included flag hoisting.[17]

When Badshah Khan spoke to Pyarelal of the quid-pro-quo between the Pakhtun tribesmen and King Zahir Shah, i.e. the King would assist in getting them Pakhtunistan in return for the Kabul throne restored to his father, he probably forgot that according to the local custom the price of the throne was paid to them there and then, on the spot, in the shape of the booty. The tribesmen from the British side of the Durand Line, mostly Waziris and Mahsuds, who bore the brunt of fighting for the restoration of the Kabul throne, were more than rewarded by the loot and plunder of Kabul, and they returned to their homes loaded with treasures, and of course their renewed interest in the throne. In fact, king-making became a lucrative business.[18]

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But Badshah Khan wanted a higher price from the King. The powerless King was unable to meet Badshah Khan's demands because the throne had already become shaky. Badshah Khan had not realized that political bargains with Kings do not have the status of treaties. When the King could repudiate the treaty of 1893, how could he be trusted to fulfil his bargain with Badshah Khan? Besides, Badshah Khan always spoke of the pledge made by the King. He seldom spoke of the pledge with the people of Afghanistan, presumably because he knew that their response would be disappointing.

Sir William Barton believes that the establishment of a frontier between British India and Afghanistan should have been done diplomatically, so as to establish a strong national state of Afghanistan. He considered the Indus river to be the logical frontier. That would have given Afghanistan a sea board along the extensive coast line, ensuring a flourishing trade. Its vulnerability along the Indus valley and along the coastal belt would have compelled her to be on good terms with Britain. There would have been no frontier problem on the north-west, and no question of assimilating an intractable minority into the Indian political structure. A strong government in Kabul, holding the Indus valley to the sea, would have dealt effectively with the border tribes.[19] This historic analysis may well have represented the legitimate aspirations of the Afghans. It may also have formed the basis of Pakhtunistan, as conceived by Kabul, and echoed by Badshah Khan in 1929, in 1947, and in fact till the end of his life. Sir William's analysis was valid in respect of Afghanistan. But he miscalculated British perceptions about the Russian bear. On the face of it, the British got a bloody nose and a bad name, in the rugged hills of the Pakhtun tribes. On the other hand, a good neighbourly Afghanistan, stretching up to the Indus and the Arabian Sea, could have hardly stopped the Russian march to the warm waters. Since this could have posed a greater threat to British India, the British chose the lesser evil of containing Afghanistan within its present borders in 1893.

Sir William's second incorrect assumption was about the assimilation of the intractable Pathan minority in the Indian political structure. The honeymoon between the *Khudai Khidmatgars* and the Indian National Congress since 1930 has

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few parallels in history. No two political groups in India have worked together so harmoniously. The Pathans accepted *ahimsa* more faithfully than any other community. At one stage they promised Mahatma Gandhi that they could abandon Badshah Khan but not him. Since partition, these 'intractable' Pathans have shown a remarkable capacity to assimilate with Balochis, Sindhis and Punjabis. Millions of them live in Sindh, amongst non-Pathans.

Sir William concludes that, once the border was established, the Pathans on the eastern side, particularly in the settled districts, had to become a political force, in keeping with the political movement in the rest of India. 'Political considerations undoubtedly led the British to allow a free hand to Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Red-Shirt leader—a policy which all but set the whole border ablaze.'[20] Thus a 'free hand to Badshah Khan' to operate politically on the east of Khyber could have been calculated to lend political stability to the Durand Line. It is a different matter that Badshah Khan did not play the British game.

International borders are seldom established by the consent of the people living along the borders. As President Ayub Khan once remarked, 'Afghan grievances were that Durand Line was in the wrong place. Then we have no alternative but to think of other lines, which had existed in the times of Mahmood Ghaznavi, Taimur, Babar and Ahmad Shah Abdali. I asked them which of these lines they would like to see established. Of course, none of these old lines would have given the Afghans direct access to the sea.' Ayub Khan then added, 'Boundaries are made and unmade by struggles, and struggles alone can alter them.'[21]

Badshah Khan's stay in Kabul proved frustrating. He had gone to Kabul to keep the issue of Pakhtunistan alive. But by that time, Kabul had run out of fuel. In 1965, a war broke out between India and Pakistan. Afghanistan did not support India; neither did it create problems for Pakistan. In fact the people of Afghanistan supported Pakistan on ideological grounds. Their government took a pragmatic view—if India defeated Pakistan the next target could be the Hindu Kush.[22]

The easing of tensions was followed up by King Zahir Shah's visit to Pakistan in 1968. In 1970, a Pakistan delegation visited

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Kabul. These bilateral visits improved relations at one level, but the presence of Abdul Ghaffar Khan kept the Pakhtunistan issue alive—though at a more subdued level. On 2 September 1969, much to the irritation of the people of Pakistan, some political leaders of Pakistan, including Abdul Wali Khan and Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai—once known as 'Balochistan Gandhi'—participated in the Pakhtunistan Day function at Kabul.[23] At the government level, this episode did not stop the process of normalization. By September 1970, joint projects for the economic development of Pakhtun homelands were seriously considered.

This love-hate relationship between the two neighbours has been aptly commented on by Rao Rashid. He says, 'I also said that Kabul's policy has always been to keep throwing occasional straws in the wind as minor irritants, but they have never taken any serious step against Pakistan, nor they will ever take it. It is not that the King or the ruling elite does or does not want it—they have a problem. Whenever there is a war between India and Pakistan, the people of Afghanistan have shown solidarity with Pakistan without any mental reservations. Thus the King can not act against the wishes of his subjects. So we need have no fear from Kabul. We can withdraw our defences along that border.'[24]

After Zahir Shah's overthrow, the monarchy came to an end sealing the fate of the pledge between the King and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Sardar Daud, who replaced Zahir Shah, and who ruled as a President and not as a King, was not bound by the pledge. However, his intentions were not clear, and anti-Pakistan elements continued to be active within his government. During the Bhutto years, the ISI 'had found and nurtured a young Kabul engineering graduate named Gulbadin Hikmatyar. The ISI not only funded and armed Hikmatyar but organized his line of communication inside Afghanistan. All this manoeuvring was to be used to exert pressure on any Kabul government that harboured any wish of rekindling the Pakhtunistan issue. And these pressure tactics worked wonders when they were applied to President Daud in the seventies. In a quick *volte face* from the belligerent posture that he had adopted, Daud rushed to Murree for talks with Bhutto and promptly made very conciliatory moves.'[25]

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Following Daud's visit, an agreement to promote mutual understanding and to close the border issue was drafted. But before the draft agreement could be signed, President Daud was overthrown. Since then, Afghanistan has faced internal upheavals, including a communist take-over, Soviet military intervention (1979), civil war, insurgency and emigration of five million refugees to Pakistan and Iran. These developments overtook the issue of Pakhtunistan. No frontier in the world today is more open than the Durand Line, where millions of Afghans move in either direction, to take refuge, or to participate in the resistance against the Kabul regime. The ill-conceived Soviet intervention bled the Soviet economy to the point of collapse. They were compelled by the determined resistance groups to withdraw. That also marked the end of the Indo-Kabul-Soviet axis on the issue of Pakhtunistan.

'In the early 1840s the British had failed to hold Afghanistan, as they competed with Czarist Russia for strategic advantage and while the two empires collided in Central Asia. In the 1980s, it was the Soviet Union, rather than Britain, which paid the price for the ill-advised invasion of Afghanistan. If USSR consulted history before its misadventure in 1979, it did not listen to the lesson it told. While the British learnt their lesson in the 19th century, the Russians did not—till they met their disaster in the 20th century.'[26]

NOTES

1. Rizvi Mujtaba, *The Frontiers of Pakistan*, p. 146 quoting *The Statesman*, Delhi, 3 July 1947.
2. Ibid., p. 145 quoting *The Statesman*, Delhi, 22 June 1947.
3. Ibid., p. 151.
4. Ibid., p. 151, quoting *Pakistan News*, London 16 June 1948.
5. Ibid., p. 151, quoting *Hindu* (Madras), 12 June 1948.
6. Ibid., p. 153.
7. Ibid., p. 153.
8. Ibid., quoting *New York Times*, 7 October, 1950.
9. Ibid., pp. 145-6.
10. Ibid., pp. 292-3.
11. Khan Abdul Wali — *Facts are Facts*, pp. 173-5.
12. *Pravda*, May 1961, p. 15 quoted Dr Azmat Hayat Khan, *Frontier Post*, 22 April, 1991.
13. Rizvi, Mujtaba, op. cit., p. 158.

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14. *Dawn*, Karachi, 6 March 1960, quoted by Dr Azmat Hayat Khan in *Frontier Post*, 22 April 1991.
15. Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan — Faith is a Battle*, p. 522.
16. Ibid., pp. 524-7.
17. Ibid., p. 528.
18. Barton Sir William, *India's North West Frontier*, 1939, p. 146.
19. Ibid., p. 150.
20. Ibid., p. 152.
21. Rizvi Mujtaba, op. cit., p. 149, quotes Ayub Khan's address to Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 11 October 1964, *Pakistan Horizon*, 1st quarter 1965.
22. Ibid., p. 160.
23. Ibid., p. 160.
24. Rashid Rao *Jo Main Ne Dekha*, p. 70.
25. *Herald*, Karachi, January 1991, pp. 31-3.
26. Walter, John H., *Beyond the Khyber Pass — The Road to British Disaster in the First Afghan War*, Random House, New York.

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Epilogue

Centuries ago, Afghan raiders, brandishing their swords, dashed through the Khyber Pass, from the west to the east; some of them plundered and returned, others stayed back and ruled. The raiders were followed by the divines who preached peace and love, in much the same way, as Abdul Ghaffar Khan did for the greater part of the twentieth century. The Afghans, both raiders and divines, crossed the Indus and went far beyond. A new culture, encompassing a common history and a common heritage developed on both sides of the Indus. This area now assumed the shape of Pakistan.

Badshah Khan played a significant role in shaping the history of this geographical entity. The fact that he opposed its creation in its present shape does not minimize his stature as a freedom fighter and a front rank leader. Most top ranking Muslim leaders of the sub-continent shared his perception of the future of India, though they may have differed in their strategy and tactics. Allama Mohammed Iqbal did not ask for an independent Muslim state. Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah disagreed with Chaudhri Rahmat Ali's concept of Pakistan. The Lahore Resolution of 1940 spoke of autonomous and sovereign Muslim homelands, after the negotiating postures of the League and the Congress had stiffened. Even so, the terms 'autonomous' and 'sovereign' could be either flexible or rigid, depending on their interpretation, but certainly not non-negotiable, as the events of 1946 proved. When the Cabinet Mission Plan was approved by all parties, the interpretation became flexible. When the Cabinet Mission Plan was tampered with, and its constitutional legitimization was made controversial, flexibility turned into rigidity. Maulana Azad was courageous enough to admit the Congress blunder and tried to make amends.

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However, the Congress refused. The Indian leaders were subsequently summoned to London. The authors of the Cabinet Mission Plan and the British government held that the Constituent Assembly could not tamper with the terms of the Mission Plan. But the Congress rejected the interpretation of the Mission Plan by the Plans' authors and by the British government. It rejected adjudication by the Federal Court.

One of the main rejectionists of the Cabinet Mission Plan was Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who did not want to join the zonal sub-federation with Punjab, Balochistan and Sindh, even though there was a provision that the Frontier could later opt out of the zonal sub-federation. On the other hand, he is on record as having said, in 1946, that if any province was dissatisfied in the Indian Union, it could opt out at any time. Whether by a constitutional mechanism, or through civil war, he did not elaborate. The leaders returned to India, the Cabinet Plan lay in shambles, and the race began for the formation of an interim government, as the British government was getting impatient. When the League joined the Cabinet, the Congress found it hard to work with the League. So it forced partition. Thus, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who was unwilling to join a sub-federation even temporarily within a United India, was now pushed by his party permanently into an independent Pakistan. Had Badshah Khan joined hands with other nationalist Muslims, led by Maulana Azad, there could have been a strong Muslim lobby in the Congress to compel it to be fair and upright in its negotiations with the League which could have ensured the unity of India.

That is now history. Ghaffar Khan's critics have a lot to say against him to the effect that the Sardaryab Resolution, owing allegiance to Pakistan, did not expressly withdraw or supersede the earlier Bannu Resolution demanding independent Pakhtunistan, and that his subsequent political moves, negated the oath of loyalty. Likewise, his admirers justify his complaints against the Muslim League namely, that the dismissal of the Congress ministry in 1947 was undemocratic, that the Quaid-i-Azam promised to meet him in Peshawar but went back on his promise, that he was subjected to prolonged physical and mental agony as a result of long periods of detentions.

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At this point of time, any verdict on such issues is counter productive, if not premature. Pakistan was created under controversial circumstances. The major territories included in West Pakistan were in the tribal stage of political evolution where democracy was unknown. To expect meek submission to a constitutional authority was an idle dream. In a country which saw insurgencies, rebellions, civil war and secession in its short history, the meaning of the terms loyalty and patriotism could only be relative and not absolute. Bengali Muslims divided Bengal in 1904, founded the Muslim League in 1905, joined Pakistan in 1947 but seceded in 1971. So why blame Badshah Khan who opposed the concept openly from the very beginning? National integration takes time. The role of Abdul Ghaffar Khan has to be seen in perspective. He remained loyal to the cause he espoused. He judged Pakistan not by its concept, which he opposed, but by its leadership, which was poor, after the Quaid-i-Azam, and by its performance which was dismal. At this point of time, Pakistan has to take note of the fact that Badshah Khan has left an indelible mark on the history of the region. His legacy is kept alive by his political heirs, including his son, Abdul Wali Khan and Ajmal Khattak, who are senior politicians and intellectuals. They lead a political party, which has remained active and stable since it was founded by Abdul Ghaffar Khan —a rare distinction, which no other party can claim. The party is run on democratic lines. Its followers, mainly Pathans, are spread in all the provinces.

After a prolonged illness, Badshah Khan, the founder of the Pakhtunistan movement, breathed his last in Peshawar in the first week of January 1988. He had willed to be buried in Jalalabad, where 'Pakhtuns were free.' At the time of his demise, Jalalabad was under Soviet army occupation. History creates its own ironies. Prior to independence, Badshah Khan lived under British 'slavery.' After independence, he thought he had come under the 'slavery' of the Punjab. After his death, his mortal remains passed into Russian 'slavery.' Thus, this stalwart of the freedom movement could not find a piece of free land for his grave. Nevertheless, to him, Pakhtun soil was sacred wherever it was. His burial in Jalalabad is a permanent symbol of the unity of Pakhtuns, which remained his passion, his goal, and his life's mission.

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The funeral procession from Utmanzai to Jalalabad was an event with few parallels in history. The caravan of cars, buses, trucks and other vehicles carrying his followers, friends and admirers was endless. A sea of humanity greeted them in Jalalabad. This was, so to say, a caravan of peace, carrying a message of love from the Pakhtuns east of Khyber to the Pakhtuns west of Khyber. If history were to line up the invaders right from Alexander, through Tamerlane, Ghaznavi, Ghauri, Babar, down to Ahmed Shah Abdali, they would, in all probability, have laid down their arms before the peace counter-offensive of Bacha Khan.

Unfortunately, the serenity of the solemn occasion was marred by the violence that erupted in Jalalabad after the funeral ceremony—yet another reminder that the line between violence and non-violence is too thin.

Bacha Khan is as great a hero of the freedom movement as others. Pakistan could not have been achieved without Indian independence. The goal of all leaders remained common—independence. The difference in the perceptions of the leaders of the Pakistan movement and Bacha Khan did not alter this basic truth. Pakistan recognizes the role of Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy and A K Fazlul Haq, even though their political heirs later fought a civil war and seceded from Pakistan. If Bacha Khan differed, so did some princes and political leaders, who tried to accede to India, Iran and Afghanistan. However, Bacha Khan's political heirs are in the mainstream of Pakistan's politics despite different perceptions, to which they are fully entitled. Their perceptions were hardened as a result of long and dark periods of dictatorship in Pakistan. A democratic Pakistan has to have room for dissent.

Americans, for example, fought a civil war in which many northerners fought for the confederationists, while many southerners fought for the unionists. It was a war between two ideologies, not between two peoples. The heroes of the rival factions are honoured today by all, without discrimination. This spirit has made them a great nation. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Joseph Brodsky and Andrei Sakharov spoke their mind with courage of their convictions, against the dictatorship of the communist system, suffered indignities, and exile. Their refusal to surrender ultimately bore fruit. They changed the direction

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of the Soviet state. Pakistan will mature as a democracy and integrate as a nation by accepting realities. Abdul Ghaffar Khan's position needs to be restored and he should be honoured as a freedom fighter. Jinnah was made the 'Quaid-i-Azam' by the people. If someday, the people of Pakistan vote Bacha Khan's political heirs into power he will in all likelihood be declared a hero of Pakistan officially. Why wait till then?

Mohammed Younus Khan was a *Khudai Khidmatgar* and a follower of Bacha Khan. Disagreeing with the partition of India, and adhering to his faith in one India, he left the Frontier and migrated to India in 1947. There he served as India's Ambassador to various countries, and is now a member of the Rajya Sabha. In 1991, he visited Pakistan for the first time and commented that there was no deep-rooted sense of politics in Pakistan, and that the only province where politics had matured was the Frontier, where there was a party long before the partition, which the people continued to support even in defeat. He added that without political sense being deep-rooted, Pakistan would continue to suffer from dictatorships. Emphasizing that dialogue was the essence of democracy, he recalled someone suggesting to Pakistan's first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan to talk to Bacha Khan, and Liaquat replying: 'One Quaid-i-Azam got killed, now should I get another one? Should I get another Quaid killed to make room for me?'[1] Younus Khan had paid his first ever visit to Pakistan after 43 years, presumably after seeing a flicker of democracy for the first time.

Sharif Farooq, a journalist, has recorded his conversation with the late Mussarrat Hasan Zuberi, who was one of the top bureaucrats 'working for Pakistan behind the scenes before independence.' Zuberi knew all the important political personalities. He claimed to know the temperament and the background of Bacha Khan's ideological aloofness from the mainstream of Pakistan but he would not disclose it while in service. One day, after his retirement as Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) Farooq asked him to speak out on the subject. Zuberi replied, 'Bacha Khan's problem is entirely psychological. He is not power hungry. . . . He needs to be respected and recognized. If I had the power, I would have offered him the exalted status of the "grand old

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man of Pakistan" at the official level, in recognition of his services and sacrifices. I would have built an official residence for him on the banks of Sardaryab, worthy of his exalted position, as a symbol of his national services. I would have made it obligatory that every visiting head of state or high level dignitary pay homage to him.'[2] Farooq agreed with Zuberi.

Although the Pakistani leadership saw him in a different light, Bacha Khan was an internationally known personality during his life time. Since his death, his heirs hold periodical conferences to commemorate his services and award the Bacha Khan Peace Prize. On 22 April 1991, the Second Bacha Khan Peace Conference was held in Peshawar, attended by five thousand admirers. The final session was presided over by the Muslim League Chief Minister of the Frontier province, of which the Awami National Party is a coalition partner. Papers were read on various aspects of the life and mission of Bacha Khan. The 1991 Peace Award was given to Maulana Abdul Sattar Edhi, who leads Pakistan's biggest and most respected welfare foundation. The First Peace Award was given to the then Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, in 1990.

Inaugurating the Conference on 22 April 1991, Wali Khan said that the two superpowers were responsible for the tragic situation in Afghanistan. He emphasized the following points:[3]

1. Since the Cold War was over and since the Jamaat-e-Islami leaders had even visited USSR, the tensions should ease in this region, particularly in Afghanistan;
2. Afghan blood was being shed by a few *mullahs*, in the name of *jihad*.
3. The weapons acquired for the Afghan *jihad* had been distributed in Sindh;
4. India was partitioned by British imperialists to encircle the USSR, and finally
5. The Government of Pakistan was now implementing the philosophy of Bacha Khan.

The statements made by Wali Khan need to be analysed. His anxiety for peace in Afghanistan is shared by all peace-loving people of the world. By implication, he held both the US and the USSR responsible for disturbing peace in the troubled land, which was a welcome sign. But basically, Afghanistan has been the victim of a civil war between a Marxist

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regime, capturing power through a coup-de-etat, and the Afghan resistance groups inspired by their Islamic traditions. The Marxist regime was perpetuated by Soviet military intervention. The resistance was stiffened by its members' determination to uproot an alien ideology. In this, they were supported by their sympathizers in other countries. The chances of a settlement improved not because the USA and the Soviet Union became friends, but because Marxism, as a creed and a system, which had inspired the upheaval in Afghanistan, collapsed in the Soviet Union. A few *mullahs* could not have sustained the civil war. Factually, it became a peoples' war in which millions have perished and millions have sought refuge outside Afghanistan. To cause 'bleeding wounds' to a superpower could not have been the handiwork of a few *mullahs*. In any case, violence has been a fairly common way of changing regimes in Kabul, even in recent times. Amanullah Khan was replaced by Bacha Saqqa (1929). The latter was eliminated by the Pakhtuns who restored the Kabul throne to Nadir Khan. The event was celebrated in Utmanzai (1929). Subsequently, Zahir Shah, Sardar Daud, Babrak Karmal, Hafizullah Amin and Noor Mohammed Taraki met the same fate. Some of them were deposed, others were assassinated. Soviet military intervention in 1979 was an act of violence. If the Kabul regime was supported by Moscow, it was only natural that the resistance should receive help from other sympathetic powers.

Wali Khan's obsession with 'a few *mullahs*' blinded him to the fact, which is universally acknowledged, that the war in Afghanistan since 1979 was a peoples' war against an alien ideology, fought with courage and determination and, and at enormous sacrifice. The human dimension of this holocaust had to be brought home to Wali Khan by the then Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, who had the rare courage to resign from his exalted position in protest against the dehumanizing policies of communism at home and abroad. Says he, 'The figures of our (Soviet) casualties in Afghanistan are widely known. People often refer to them, but are silent for some reason about another horrifying figure: one and a half million Afghans killed. The human dimension is single and universal; it is difficult to tolerate attempts to use it selectively.' As if to give a fitting response to Wali Khan, he goes on to

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say: 'In my view politicians who forget that people are first of all people, and only afterward the exponents of certain views, have no business in politics.' He has condemned the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as 'an effort to exploit a regional conflict to expand our sphere of influence and to sow the doubt as to the sincerity of our desire to conduct international relations.'[4]

Wali Khan's reference to gun-running in Sindh resulting from Pakistan's involvement in the inter-Afghan conflict is well founded. The twin phenomenon of drug-trafficking and gun-running is a dangerous fall-out of Pakistan's role in the Afghan conflict. The damage sustained by Pakistan in the short run, as well as in the long run, in the spread of terrorism, increasing crime, a distorted economy, a corrupted society and a rise in drug addiction, far outweighs the advantages perceived by some in Pakistan. No country should destroy its internal social and economic fabric to gain a foreign policy goal, which may change if the conditions change.

Wali Khan's adverse verdict on the partition of India has been discussed in the appropriate chapters.

During the informal discussions at the conference, Wali Khan alleged that Pakistan had made so much fuss about the sanctity and inviolability of the Durand Line, but is allowing the crossing, recrossing and criss-crossing of the line by the opponents of the Kabul government, and thereby violating the sanctity itself without any qualms of international law and conduct. So much so, that it has allowed the head of Jamaat-i-Islami, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, to cross the line and visit Khost after its fall in April 1991. Raising no objection to the visit by itself is a violation of the line.'

During his speech, Wali Khan announced that the Pakistan government had refused permission to the Afghan Consul General in Islamabad to attend the conference but the Consul stationed in Peshawar was allowed to represent his country. The crowd responded with cries of 'shame, shame!' The rostrum was then given to the Indian Ambassador, who paid rich tributes to Bacha Khan, 'who was Mahatma Gandhi's most eloquent echo in the Frontier, who ruled the hearts of the people, and who was a leader with a mission and with a philosophy of non-violence.'[5]

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Addressing the conference on 23 April 1991 Ajmal Khattak, who had fled to Kabul in 1973 after the Liaquat Bagh firing incident in Rawalpindi, remained in exile till 1990, and who is the current President of the ANP and the party's mentor, said that Bacha Khan became famous as *Baba-e-Pakhtun, Baba-i-Pakhtun-Khwa,* father of peace, father of destiny, but none of these attributes projected his true personality adequately. He believed that Bacha Khan was in fact, *Baba-i-Asar:* the father who moulded minds. He went on to add that Bacha Khan created, changed and moulded history, changed the destiny of nations and gave a new message of peace, love, brotherhood and non-violence to the world. Ajmal Khattak did not approve of Bacha Khan being called 'Sarhadi Gandhi,' because 'he was neither a Sarhadi, nor a Gandhi.' He said that Bacha Khan had his own distinct personality, which could not be contained or confined to a country, to a region or to a continent; he was a 'universal and timeless phenomenon.'[6] Once, Bacha Khan himself had advised his Indian followers and admirers not to call him Frontier Gandhi, for which he had given a different reason, which was more humble and self-effacing, in keeping with his nature, and out of the reverence he had for Gandhi. Replying to an address of welcome on 2 October 1934, in Albert Hall (Calcutta), he told Bengali students, 'I request you not to call me Frontier Gandhi, because there should be only one Gandhi. And if there be two, then inevitably there will be a quarrel. Mahatma Gandhi is our general and there should be one general only. So do not add Gandhi to my name. I am not fit for the praise you have showered on me.'[7] In any case, the title 'Frontier Gandhi' has a history, a significance, a link and an association with Mahatma Gandhi in a spiritual way, which cannot be denied, and which in no way, underrates Bacha Khan's stature or circumscribes his mission. Hence the justification for the title of this book.

Ajmal Khattak, who has the benefit of Bacha Khan's close association during the latter's visits to Kabul and Moscow, revealed in his address that Bacha Khan had told the Afghan President, Dr Noor Mohammed Taraki, the leader of the Saur Revolution, that his revolution was incomplete without the uplift of the poor, the dispossessed, the under-privileged and the deprived sections of the Afghan society. Ajmal Khattak, a

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staunch supporter of the Saur Revolution, who enjoyed cordial relations with successive Kabul regimes, also gave an insight into Bacha Khan's meeting with the Soviet President, Leonid Brezhnev, in which he told the latter that the Soviet development and progress was incomplete and meaningless without the improvement of the socio-economic conditions in the Soviet villages. Perhaps Bacha Khan was too gentle to tell the revolutionary Afghan and Soviet leaders that Marxism had failed to bring prosperity and to establish social justice as promised seventy years ago.

Ajmal Khattak concluded by saying that Bacha Khan founded a political party (now called the Awami National Party), 'based on the principles of non-violence, patriotism, social service, free from greed and temptation for jobs—the only party today which was truly national, well-knit, democratic, devoted to social uplift, unlike other parties which thrived on official patronage, nepotism, favouritism, exploitation of religion for political ends and slogan mongering. Out of power, those parties crash because they had no roots in the masses.'

Among the notable features of the Bacha Khan Peace Conference were that all the speakers called the Frontier province 'Pakhtunkhwa,' even though that was not the official name of the province, and that the leaders of all political parties, notably Chief Minister Mir Afzal Khan (Muslim League), Ex-Prime Minister Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi (National Peoples Party) and Malik Qasim (Muslim League, Malik Qasim Group) also paid homage to Bacha Khan. Malik Qasim reminded the followers of Bacha Khan that their leader was a man of peace, who preached peace all his life and yet they (his followers) were blaming the superpowers for the civil war among the Pakhtuns in Afghanistan. 'What about the parties to the conflict! At least some of them share Bacha Khan's ideals. Why can not they take the initiative and begin a dialogue for peace and keep out the superpowers?'[8]

Malik Qasim's tribute to the memory of Bacha Khan was appropriate and significant. He posed a question which was fundamental in nature and relevant to the theme of the conference. Bacha Khan's following was not circumscribed by political or international boundaries. His ideals travelled far and wide through his message of peace and non-violence. He

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commanded a receptive audience in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Besides, successive rulers in Delhi and Kabul held him in high esteem. Paradoxically, his admirers in India and Pakistan played a partisan role in the Afghan civil war, much against his teachings. As to his followers and admirers in Afghanistan, their presence was nowhere in evidence, in any shape or form, either preaching peace and non-violence, or providing humanitarian relief to the victims of the fratricidal conflict. Malik Qasim spoke briefly but did not mince his words in rebuking the political heirs of Bacha Khan for showing scant regard for, and paying only lip service to, his teachings and his mission.

Bacha Khan once claimed that the Pakhtuns deserved one fourth share in Pakistan's wealth which, in his judgement, was denied to them. He had, however, underestimated his own people. Within his own lifetime, the Pathans had achieved more than their share, and were well-equipped to acquire more. Limited to one-fourth, they would have been losers. No one could realistically set limits to the progress of a community so dedicated and so hard-working. It is a tribute to their dynamism that they have readjusted to the political environment created against the will of Bacha Khan, and moved with the current, much more smoothly than he did.

Within living memory, the Pakhtuns have been cast in a variety of moulds by political craftsmen. Syed Ahmad Barelvi's call for an Islamic *jihad* received spontaneous response from them, leading to the establishment of a mini-Islamic state. Following the Pakhtun victory of Kabul and the restoration of the throne to Nadir Shah, their outlook was changed from Pan-Islamism to Pan-Pakhtunism by Bacha Khan (1929). Through Gandhi's teachings, they embraced *ahimsa*, a creed based on one of the multi-dimensional off-shoots of ancient Hindu philosophy, being led to believe that the holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) taught and practised the same. This was entirely a new dimension, which ultimately turned them into *Khudai Khidmatgars*—members of a strictly non-political movement. From there they went almost spontaneously into the political arms of the Indian National Congress (1930). This event also marked a shift from Pakhtun nationalism to Indian nationalism. In 1947, when the partition plan was announced, a desperate

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attempt was made to turn them back to Pan-Pakhtunism, but the attempt, being abrupt and ill-timed, proved abortive. A strong current swept them away from the one-nation theory to the two-nation theory and, rejecting both Pan-Pakhtunism and Indian nationalism, they accepted Pakistani nationalism. Ghani Khan created *Zalm-e-Pakhtun,* permitting violence selectively. Bacha Khan warned them against Punjabi domination but his brother Dr Khan Saheb amalgamated them with the Punjab. Wali Khan encouraged their participation in Pakistan's defence and ensured their share in the wealth of Karachi. With one exception, attempted in vain by Bacha Khan in 1947, the shifting from one outlook to another was almost natural, and in fact so remarkable as to baffle even those who led them into the change. The greatest of these craftsmen, undoubtedly, was Gandhi, who held them spell-bound for a couple of decades. To understand this phenomenon, one has to dig deep into the dynamics of Pakhtun politics, which is based on pragmatism and realism, rather than idealism and emotionalism.

NOTES

1. Younus Khan, Mohammed, interview to *Herald*, Karachi, January 1991, pp. 180-1.
2. Farooq, Sharif 'Bacha Khan, Quaid-i-Azam and Wali Khan,' *Daily Jihad*, Peshawar, 23 April 1991.
3. *Daily Jihad*, Peshawar, 23 April 1991 and *Daily Nawa-i-Asman*, Hyderabad, 23 April 1991.
4. Shevardnadze, Eduard, *The Future belongs to Freedom*, Sinclair and Stevenson.
5. Author's personal notes at the conference.
6. Author's personal notes at the conference.
7. Tendulkar, D G *'Abdul Ghaffar Khan — Faith is a Battle,'* p. 179.
8. Author's personal notes at the conference.

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Glossary

Ahimsa	:	One of the doctrines of Hinduism, meaning respect for life both human and animal; enjoins vegetarianism, belief in unity of all life; keystone of Indian ethics; non-violence.
Ahl-e-Kitab	:	People of The Revealed Books. Muslims consider Christians and Jews to be *Ahl-e-Kitab*.
AICC	:	All India Congress Committee
Akbar	:	Moghul Emperor.
Allama	:	Learned Muslim scholar
ANP	:	Awami National Party, formerly National Awami Party, founded by Abdul Ghaffar Khan.
Arjuna	:	A legendary Hindu warrior prince described in *Mahabharata*.
Arya Samaj	:	A militant Hindu fanatic organization (literally the Aryan society).
Ashram	:	Hermitage, a place of study and discipline to life.
Aurangzeb	:	Moghul Emperor.
Awami	:	Peoples'
Azan	:	A call to Muslim prayer.
Baba	:	Father.
Bacha Khan	:	Pushto equivalent of Badshah Khan.
Badshah	:	King.
Badshah Khan	:	Honorific title conferred upon Abdul Ghaffar Khan by his followers.

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Bande-Matram	:	Congress national anthem adopted as India's national anthem.
Bania, Banya	:	Hindu trader, money lender.
Bapu	:	Father.
Begum	:	Madam, Mrs, Wife, Lady.
Bhagwad Gita	:	A Hindu holy scripture.
Bhajan	:	Hindu devotional hymn.
Bhat	:	Bard.
Birla	:	Name of a wealthy Congressman.
Brij Bhasha	:	Hindi language.
Charkha	:	Spinning wheel.
CP	:	Central Provinces, now Madhya Pradesh in India.
Crore	:	Ten million.
Dara Shikoh	:	Eldest son of Emperor Shahjahan who was fifth in line to the Moghul dynasty.
Darbar	:	Assembly.
Darul Ulum	:	Seat of learning.
Deoband	:	A city in India where a centre of Islamic learning is located.
Fakhr	:	Pride.
Fakhr-e-Afghan	:	Pride of Afghans.
Fakhr-e-Asia	:	Pride of Asia.
Fakhr-e-Hind	:	Pride of India.
Fakir	:	Saint.
Fatwa	:	Religious verdict; an authoritative interpretation of Islamic law.
Gita	:	Bhagwad Gita, a Hindu holy scripture.
Goondas	:	Hooligans.
Granth Sahib	:	Holy scripture of Sikhs.
Harijan	:	Children of God; name given by Gandhi to low-caste Hindus or untouchables.
Hartal	:	Strike in protest.
Hatim	:	A legendary Arab known for generosity.
Hijra, Hijrat	:	Departure from one's country. Emigration.
Hindustan	:	India.

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Hindustan Hamara	:	Our India. It is the title of a poem by Sir Mohammed Iqbal, emphasising Indian nationalism.
Hindustani	:	Literally Indian; a language spoken before independence by most north-Indians; Hindus called it Hindi, Muslims called it Urdu.
HMG	:	His Majesty's Government. British Government.
Hujra	:	A village guest house.
Ijma	:	Consensus.
Imam	:	Leader; one who leads prayer.
INC	:	Indian National Congress.
Inqilab	:	Revolution.
ISI	:	Inter Services Intelligence of Pakistan.
Jagir	:	Assignment of land or land revenue.
Jamaat	:	Party—like *Jamaat-i-Islami*.
Jamiat	:	Party—like *Jamiat-ul-Ulemai-Hind*.
Jashan	:	Day of celebration; festivity.
Jatt, Jutt	:	In Sindh a rustic, illiterate man.
Jehangir	:	A Moghul Emperor, son of Akbar the Great.
Jihad	:	Muslim holy war.
Jirga	:	Assembly of tribal chiefs, elders.
Jiye-Sindh	:	Long live Sindh; name of a Sindh Nationalist Party.
Kafir	:	Infidel.
Kafir-e-Azam	:	The great infidel.
Kalidas	:	Outstanding Indian poet and dramatist of 5th century A D at the court of emperor Chandra Gupta II; among his well known works is *Shakuntala*.
Kanya	:	Female.
Kanya Ashram	:	Ashram reserved for females.
Khadhi	:	Home-spun cloth.
Khan	:	A suffix, literally meaning chief;

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		originating in Central Asia; applied by some Muslims in South Asia; more common among Pathans.
Khudai Khidmatgar	:	Servant of God with *ahimsa* as his creed.
Lakh	:	A hundred thousand.
Mahabharata	:	A Hindu scripture written in 1500 B C.
Mahajan	:	Money lender.
Mahatma	:	The great soul; associated with celebrated Hindu religious leaders; also with Gandhi.
Maidan	:	Ground; open space; meeting place.
Malang	:	Half-naked saint.
Mal-e-Ghanimat	:	Spoils of war; loot; plunder following a victory.
Mantras	:	Verses.
Masjid	:	Mosque.
Masjid-i-Nabvi	:	The Prophet's Mosque located in Madina.
Maulana	:	Muslim religious scholar.
Maulvi	:	Muslim religious teacher.
Melechh, Melechha	:	Impure. Generally attributed by Hindus to Muslims, or other non Hindus.
MLA	:	Member Legislative Assembly.
Mufti	:	A person with the authority to interpret Islamic law.
Mujahideen	:	Holy warriors, freedom fighters.
Mullah	:	Muslim religious teacher.
Musalman, Muhammadan	:	Muslim.
Namaz	:	Muslim prayer.
Naushervan	:	A Persian King known for his sense of justice.
NWFP	:	North West Frontier Province.
Pakhtunistan	:	The land of Pakhtuns; demanded as an independent country by Abdul Ghaffar Khan.
Pakhtun Khwa	:	Pakhtun side, Pakhtun land.

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Pakhtuns	:	Pathans.
PBUH	:	Peace Be Upon Him; associated with the Prophet of Islam.
Prarthna	:	Hindu prayer.
Quaid-i-Azam	:	The great leader; a title attached to Mr Jinnah's name.
Raj	:	Rule, Empire.
Rajya Sabha	:	Upper House in Indian Parliament.
Rama	:	One of the Hindu gods.
Ramadan, Ramzan	:	Muslim month of fasting.
Ramayana	:	Ancient Indian scripture written in 1500 B C.
Ram Raj	:	Rule of god Rama; Rule of Hindus.
Rashtria	:	Nation.
RCD	:	Regional Co-operation (between Pakistan, Iran and Turkey) for Development.
RSS	:	Rashtrya Sevak Sangh — a militant Hindu fanatic organisation.
RTC	:	Round Table Conference.
Sarhad	:	Frontier.
Satyagraha	:	Passive resistance.
Saur Revolution	:	April revolution.
Shaikh-ul-Hind	:	The Shaikh of India; Muslim religious authority.
Shariat, Sharia	:	Islamic system.
Shastri	:	Learned Hindu scholar.
Shiva Sena	:	The army of god Shiva.
Shri	:	Mr
Shudhi	:	Reconversion to Hinduism.
Shura	:	Consultative Assembly/System of Consultation.
Sikh	:	Follower of Sikhism.
Sikhism	:	A religious faith propagated by Guru Nanak.
Sikhistan	:	Independent homeland of Sikhs.
Sivaji, Shivaji	:	Maratha warrior who rose to prominence during the period of Moghul decline to restore India to Hinduism and to banish aliens.

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Sufism	:	Mysticism.
Swadeshi	:	Home made.
Swaraj	:	Self-rule; independence.
Torah	:	The Old Testament.
Tulsi Ramayan	:	A Hindu holy scripture.
Ulema	:	Plural of Alim, a scholar in Islamic learning.
UP	:	United Provinces; now Uttar Pradesh in India.
Urdu	:	A major language of South Asia; Pakistan's national language.
Ved	:	A Hindu scripture. There are four Vedas.
Vedantism	:	Religions of the Vedas; one of the basic doctrines of Hinduism.
Vishnu	:	The supreme god; the protector; his spouse is Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth; he incarnated nine times, as Rama, Krishna and others.
WAPDA	:	Water and Power Development Authority.
Yadhishtra	:	A legendary Hindu model king described in *Mahabharata;* eldest son of Kunti.
Zalm-e-Pakhtun	:	Militant wing of *Khudai Khidmat-gars.*
Zindabad	:	Long live.

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